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CENSORING IRAQ
MICHAEL YON

THE NEW FACE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY?

MATTHEW CONTINETTI
on Montana's Jon Tester and the GOP Woes in the Mountain West

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Rather than ask itself whether it can balance security against liberty interests, the judiciary ought to ask itself whether the other branches could strike a better balance. Given the institutional problems with courts, the judiciary may undermine, rather than promote, the war on terrorism.

—John Yoo

Hong Kong Gone Wrong

The end of a magnificent experiment in human liberty

It had to happen. Hong Kong's policy of "positive nonintervention" was too good to last. So it was sadly unsurprising to see Hong Kong's current leader announce that the government would now intervene in the economy under conditions the government itself would define.

At the end of World War II, Hong Kong was a dirt-poor island with a per capita income about one-quarter that of Britain's. By 1997, when sovereignty was transferred to China, its per capita income was roughly equal to that of the departing colonial power. That was a striking demonstration of the productivity of freedom, of what people can do when they are left free to pursue their own interests.

Yet whatever happens to Hong Kong in the future, the experience of the last 50 years will continue to instruct and encourage the friends of economic freedom.

—Milton Friedman

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Contents

October 30, 2006 • Volume 12, Number 7

2 Scrapbook .... *George Will, Virginia rednecks, and more.*

4 Casual ..... *Joseph Epstein, flogger.*

5 Correspondence ..... *Isikoff vs. Novak.*

7 Editorial ..... *Vote Early and Often*

Articles

9 In Ford They Trust? *The Tennessee race may decide control of the Senate.* ..... BY DUNCAN CURRIE

11 Conclusion First, Debate Afterwards *The stacked Baker-Hamilton Commission.* ..... BY MICHAEL RUBIN

13 A New Terrorist Haven *The advance of Islamists in Somalia.* ..... BY DAVEED GARTENSTEIN-ROSS & BILL ROGGIO

15 Taking 'Takings' to the Voters *Initiatives in California and other states.* ..... BY SHIKHA DALMIA & LEONARD GILROY

17 The Suburbs from Hell *The GOP is in trouble in the districts around Philadelphia.* ..... BY SONNY BUNCH

19 Extra, Extra, Reid All About It *The press looks at the pratfalls of a Democrat, for a change.* ..... BY WHITNEY BLAKE

21 Gotta Play to Win *Conservatives shouldn't sit this one out.* ..... BY CRAIG SHIRLEY

Cover: Getty Images / Win McNamee

Features

24 How the West Was Won
Is Senate candidate Jon Tester the new face of the Democratic party?. ... BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

29 Censoring Iraq
Why there are so few reporters with American troops in combat... ..... BY MICHAEL YON

Books & Arts

35 Eyeless in Israel *Biblical metaphor and the Jewish state.* ..... BY BENJAMIN BALINT

37 The Talking Cure *What it means about what we say.* ..... BY BARTON SWAIM

39 Horror, 1916 *The price of victory in mechanized war.* ..... BY ROBERT MESSENGER

42 Born Free *The 'interesting madman' who upset the Enlightenment.* ..... BY LAWRENCE KLEPP

44 'Reds' Alert *Warren Beatty's history lesson is 25 years old.* ..... BY ANDREW FERGUSON

46 The 'Borat' Show *The man who would be Kazakhstan's man of the moment.* ..... BY JOHN PODHORETZ

48 Parody ..... *Barack Obama answers children's letters.*

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Books, Books, and More Books

Last week, THE SCRAPBOOK noted (with quasi-parental pride) books on war and history newly published by some of our distinguished contributors. Here—with equal pride, we hasten to assure both sets of contributors—is the second installment of new books from our extended editorial family.

Contributing editor Joseph Epstein, whose productivity is both goad and inspiration to THE SCRAPBOOK, is about to grace us with an elegant contribution to HarperCollins's "Eminent Lives" series. Who is more eminent than Alexis de Tocqueville? And what better guide to Tocqueville—"Democracy's Guide"—than Epstein?

Contributor Larry Miller (we think of him for his peerless DAILY STANDARD meditations—others might know him from TV and movies) is out with *Spoiled Rotten America*—a series of beautifully crafted, penetrating and funny, essays. Goes with Epstein like port goes with Stilton.

More on America: The AEI Press, our upstairs neighbors, give us Walter Berns's *Democracy and the Constitution*, a series of learned and trenchant essays from one of our leading constitutional thinkers—actually, one of our leading thinkers, period.

Nicholas Antongiavanni's *The Suit: A Machiavellian Approach to Men's Style*, is a suitable tribute to Machiavelli. "Antongiovanni" is the pen name of Michael Anton, a valued contributor to this magazine before stints of government service, during which he found time to craft this deft commentary on Machiavelli's *Prince*, which is also a useful guide to how to dress!

Frequent contributor Stephen Schwartz meanwhile asks, *Is It Good for the Jews*? (always of interest to THE SCRAPBOOK, some of whose best friends . . .) and provides an interesting, idiosyncratic discussion of the American Jewish community and its political affiliations and lobbying efforts.

More on the Jews: Drew Friedman, creator of some of the finest illustrations to have graced these pages, sends us a charming and whimsical collection of illustrations of *Old Jewish Comedians*. This is a unique book. If, like THE SCRAPBOOK, you're a fan of, say, Rodney Dangerfield—né Jacob Cohen—go out and buy it. And if you're not? Go out and buy it anyway.

Your holiday shopping should now be complete—wait, throw in the paperback edition of *The Weekly Standard: A Reader*, some of the best of our first ten years, and you'll have everything a reader could want. ♦

We Don't Need No Stinkin' Soulcraft

Here is a telling sign of how disenchanted with the Republican party some conservatives have grown. Conservative elder statesman George F. "Statecraft as Soulcraft" Will threw a hissy fit in his *Newsweek* column last week over the (arguably redundant) legislation passed by the 109th Congress banning most Internet gambling. Those wacky Republicans on Capitol Hill, he sniffed, were advancing a "mother-hen agenda" that he termed "Prohibition II." How preposterous!

"Granted," he wrote,

> some people gamble too much. And some people eat too many cheeseburgers. But who wants to live in a society that protects the weak-willed by criminalizing cheeseburgers? Besides, the problems . . . of criminal involvement in gambling, and of underage and addictive gamblers, can be best dealt with by legalization and regulation. . . . Furthermore, taxation of online poker and other gambling could generate billions for governments.

All in all, a more-than-competent exposition of the libertarian point of view—although from that same point of view those *billions for governments!* might be considered a mixed blessing. But there's an older, deeper view of this subject that deserves a hearing. It was once ably expounded by another conservative columnist:

> If life is, as a poet said, a sum of habits disturbed by a few thoughts, we should think clearly about those habits we deliberately develop. Consider the rapid spread of legal gambling. . . . Are there social costs from all this? Lots, beginning with the ruinous—to health, work and families—excesses of compulsive gamblers. . . . Gambling can be a benign entertainment, but it can become, for individuals and perhaps for a society, a way of attempting to evade the stern fact that (as Henry James said) "life is effort, unremittingly repeated." Gambling inflames the lust for wealth without work, weakening a perishable American belief—that the moral worth of a person is gauged not by how much money he makes but by how he makes his money. . . . With a deepening dependency of individuals and governments on gambling, we are gambling with our national character, forgetting that character is destiny.

Okay, that wasn't technically *another* columnist. Max Beerbohm would have termed this "the young self meets the old self." The latter passage is from George F. Will, circa 1993.

Republicans in Congress may be for-

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given for thinking that with his latest outburst, Will has cast them as Charlie Brown and himself as Lucy, gleefully pulling the football away just as they kicked. ♦

NoVa v. RoVa

In yet another gaffe, Republican senator George Allen last week referred to his constituents in rural Virginia as gun-loving, trailer-dwelling, neo-Confederate crystal meth addicts. In northern Virginia "a lab is the family dog," he said. In the rest of Virginia "a lab is the family meth business." The *Washington Post* reacted with predictable outrage, calling Allen's remarks "an ugly stereotype."

No, wait. Excuse us. It wasn't Allen who said this. It was the *Washington Post* that painted Virginians outside the Beltway as mouth-breathing hillbillies. In an item in the paper's Style section, the witty *Post* stylists limned the differences between northern Virginia (NoVa)—whose residents "tend to be much more liberal than those in the rest of the state"—and the rest of Virginia (RoVa). Among other distinctions:

"In NoVa, they listen to NPR. In RoVa they listen to the NRA."

"In NoVa . . . when people speak of a 'trailer' they mean a movie ad, and in RoVa 'sprawl' is what you do on the couch after Sunday dinner."

"In RoVa, they hope the South will rise again. In NoVa, they hope the soufflé will."

"In NoVa a 'fur piece' is something a woman wears on a special occasion. In RoVa, a 'fur piece' is a unit of distance."

"NoVa has Crate & Barrel. RoVa has Cracker Barrel."

Next time liberals wonder why they can't make inroads with rural voters, we refer them to Exhibit A. ♦

Wonder What He Did Wednesday Night

"North Koreans carrying torches march as they mark the 80th anniversary of the Down with Imperialism Union, a group purportedly founded by the late North Korean leader Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang Tuesday night."

—*Photo caption*,
Great Falls Tribune, *Oct. 18, 2006*

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Casual

A-Flogging We Shall Go

I like to think that I am the only heterosexual non-transvestite man in America who put on makeup not once but twice this past Thursday. The reason I did was that I appeared on two different television shows in Chicago for the purpose of flogging a new book. I love that word, "flog," even though it vaguely suggests a dead horse; in Webster's fourth definition, it means to promote. I have been flogging away for the better part of a month, and my arms grow tired.

Lots of writers profess to hate taking their show on the road to promote their books. Others, I'm told, long to be asked. I used not to do the promotion circuit. I write 'em, was my view, you sell 'em. Promotion of this kind takes days out of one's life. I no longer feel the same about this, and am perfectly ready to write 'em and also try my best to sell 'em—and this chiefly because I believe that carefully aimed promotion works to bring in money and that more golden entity, good new readers.

My own roadshow has been made splendidly smooth by my publisher's tactful and savvy publicity department, which makes travel and hotel reservations, and lines up bookstore and radio and television appearances. A relatively new fine twist has been added by the hiring, in various cities, of public relations agencies that supply the author with an escort during his visit. The escort usually identifies him- or more often herself by holding up a copy of your book at the airport, then drives you to your hotel and to your various appointments, filling you in on the style and manner of the talk-show hosts you are about to meet. Pretty cushy, I'd say.

The great roadshow terror is that very few people show up at a bookstore in a strange city where you are scheduled to give a spiel and do a book-signing. I have heard tales of no one at all showing up. Thus far I have missed this little nightmare. But I attended such a bookstore appearance for a friend one cold Chicago night in February that attracted a crowd of six people, including me and my wife, a homeless man, and a few others of dubious mental balance. Brave woman, my friend went ahead anyway, in the spirit of the show must go on, selling and signing no books whatsoever.

Darren Gygi

I thought I was in for a similar ordeal last summer when, on a Sunday afternoon in Santa Rosa, California, with the temperature at 112, my escort pulled up before an independent bookstore called Copperfield's. By spiel-time, though, 28 people—by my escort's count—had arrived, thereby delaying my nightmare for (doubtless) another time. Generally, I draw crowds of between sixty and a hundred or so people, and a few more in Chicago, where I am local-boy made semi-good. Television stars (Tom Brokaw) and politicians (Hillary Clinton) draw hundreds, which does not speak well for the country's cultural life.

How many books get sold as a result of these appearances no one seems to know for certain. After some of my appearances before, say, 100 people, twenty or thirty books get sold and signed; I have had a few such appearances where perhaps forty books are sold, including some of my earlier books. Meanwhile, it must cost roughly $400 a day to keep a writer on the road. One cannot gauge with any exactitude how profitable all this is to the publisher and writer, but then no one ever said publishing was a notably efficient business.

I've come to enjoy flogging because it allows me to meet readers I didn't know existed and rediscover others I had forgot about. In a Barnes and Noble in New York, I met a once-close friend I hadn't seen in twenty years. In Marin County, I encountered a woman who was the cousin of my dear friend, the late Edward Shils, though she had never met him and was pleased to have me fill her in on his life. At a Borders in a northern suburb of Chicago, the widow and widower of two kids with whom I went to high school introduced themselves to me. Widows and widowers, dear God, more than mere intimations of mortality here.

Between radio and television appearances, I find television less congenial, chiefly because, when viewing myself on the tube later, I discover how strange I look. Always a mistake to see yourself on television for an extended period. A friend reported to me that her father told her so often she was beautiful that she had come to believe it, until she made the error of looking at herself on a monitor while being interviewed on French television, and now can never again think of herself as a beauty. No one ever called me beautiful, but after seeing myself seven or eight times on television, I'm immensely grateful no one has ever mentioned the word grotesque. In my case, lots more makeup is obviously needed.

Joseph Epstein

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THAT DAME PLAME …

I WAS AMUSED, to say the least, to see that my old friends at THE WEEKLY STANDARD asked Bob Novak to review *Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War*, the new book I coauthored with David Corn ("Who Said What When," Oct. 16). I'll resist the temptation to be snide about this (was Scooter Libby unavailable?) in order to gently point out a few of the inaccuracies and misrepresentations in the esteemed columnist's critique.

Novak writes that *Hubris* "never even mentions" a report that Valerie Plame "had been outed long ago" by Soviet spy Aldrich Ames. But Novak must have missed page 284 where we note that, before his arrest in 1994, Ames had served on a promotion panel for CIA officers, including those, like Plame, who had nonofficial cover (NOC) status. As we report, agency officials who conducted a *post-mortem* on the Ames affair feared that he may have tipped off the Soviets to the identities of CIA officers whose careers he was evaluating, and, as a result, some NOCs were brought home.

But we interviewed a number of senior CIA operations officers familiar with the Ames case—including a counter-intelligence official with direct knowledge of the damage assessment report—and none could say with any certainty that Ames had specifically fingered Plame to his Soviet handlers. Maybe Novak has better sources on this, but absent hard confirmation, we chose to be cautious and write that "within the CIA, some officers later came to believe" that Plame's return to agency headquarters in 1997 was prompted by the Ames affair, "but it was never clear if Ames told the Russians about her."

Novak writes that he is "disappointed" that the book did not probe more deeply into what Plame actually did at the CIA. But Novak also must have missed the introduction to *Hubris* (and much of Chapter 15) where we report for the first time Plame's actual job: chief of operations for the Joint Task Force on Iraq within the Counterproliferation Division of the Directorate of Operations. In that capacity, Plame flew to Jordan in 2001 to assist the CIA operation that seized aluminum tubes intended for Saddam's regime—a clandestine operation that, like others she worked on, undermines the claim by some partisans that she was little more than a pencil-pushing desk analyst.

Novak writes that our book "comes close" to being "an unmitigated apologia" for Joseph Wilson. Yet the book describes Wilson as an "imperfect critic" who at times garbled facts and "overstated his case"—hardly a blanket defense. The book details each of Wilson's misstatements—including his erroneous claim to have debunked documents he never saw—even as it concludes that on larger points, such as the administration's twisting of intelligence on Iraq, he was basically right.

Finally, while I appreciate Novak's laudatory words about my reportage, I must offer a word of defense for my coauthor. Novak portrays Corn as a left-wing polemicist more interested in furthering an ideological agenda than seeking the truth. Yet in the course of our collaboration, Corn showed not the slightest hesitancy about pursuing and including prominently in our book the information that has gotten *Hubris* its most attention: the disclosure that then-Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, not a White House official, was Novak's original source about Valerie Plame. If only some conservative journalists showed the same willingness to report stories that conflict with their initial assumptions.

The revelation about Armitage undercut some of the political left's theories about the Plame case. This is by no means the whole story, of course. As we document, at the same time Armitage was leaking to Novak, Libby and Karl Rove were spreading the same information about Wilson's wife to other reporters in an effort to discredit an Iraq war critic who had clearly become a nuisance. Still, at the end of the day, our reporting confirmed Novak's initial assertion that his first source was a senior official who did not have a reputation as a "partisan gunslinger." I can only hope that over time Novak will reflect on this and show some gratitude, perhaps in his forthcoming and long-awaited memoirs—which I (or better yet, David Corn!) will be happy to review in THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

MICHAEL ISIKOFF
Silver Spring, Md.

ROBERT D. NOVAK RESPONDS: I erred in saying *Hubris* "never even mentions" Aldrich Ames outing Mrs. Wilson. I should have said the book "never seriously considers" Ames outing Mrs. Wilson, which I found accepted in intelligence circles. My overall point was that the book does not delve deeply into matters that might contradict the Joseph Wilson conspiracy theory. I regret that my friend Mike Isikoff, in his letter, is still peddling the story of Scooter Libby and Karl Rove attempting to discredit Wilson by revealing his wife's intelligence background. Apparently, he joins David Corn in not being able to accept that the conspiracy theory was demolished by his own book.

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the weekly Standard

Vote Early and Often

David Kuo, once an official of President Bush's faith-based initiative, published a book this month that attacks the White House for privately ridiculing evangelical Christians while cynically manipulating how they vote. The book arrived, cynically enough, just in time for the midterm election—an election Kuo says Christians should boycott. Meanwhile, the mainstream media, like sportswriters cheerleading for the home team, is predicting a landslide in the interest of promoting one. Their home team, of course, is the Democrats. As for Republican efforts to spur a big turnout on November 7, the press frowns on such cheap tactics. "GOP Aims to Scare Up Big Voter Turnout" was the headline on a *Washington Post* story last week.

If you suspect there are forces eager to suppress Republican turnout, you are right. Rarely has the press echoed Democratic themes as relentlessly as it has in the closing weeks of the 2006 campaign. And the main theme is that Republicans are about to be blown away. The question now is whether this message will persuade Republican voters to stay home on Election Day. It shouldn't, so long as Republicans—and especially conservative Republicans—act like adults, not like petulant children angry over one thing or another that didn't go their way.

Yes, the Republican performance in the last two years has been disappointing. The Iraq war isn't going well. President Bush and the Republican Congress have spent too much of the taxpayer's money. They got nowhere on overhauling Social Security and only part of the way—beefed-up border security—on immigration reform. The list goes on. Still, the reasons given for staying home on Election Day are pathetically disconnected from the realities of politics and political power.

Allowing Democrats to take over Congress won't lead to a Republican course correction any more than losing the 2000, 2002, and 2004 elections taught Democrats to move to the right. Politics doesn't work that way, and it never has.

The president and Republicans need to be taught a lesson: We hear that a lot from conservatives. And maybe Bush and company do. But allowing Democrats to take over Congress won't achieve that. It won't lead to a Republican course correction any more than losing the 2000, 2002, and 2004 elections taught Democrats to move to the right. Politics doesn't work that way, and it never has. Losing simply hurts a political party. A landslide loss in 2006 would merely weaken the Republican party. And, for the foreseeable future, the Republican party is the only vehicle through which conservatives and moderates can accomplish their goals.

Would Democrats join with social and religious conservatives to curb abortion and block same-sex marriage? Never in a million years. Would Democrats please small-government conservatives by cutting taxes and limiting spending growth? Not a chance. Would they thrill libertarians by pursuing privatization of Social Security or by resisting the demands of the global-warming faddists for a full-blown regulatory state? Don't bet on it. Would they satisfy moderates by compromising with conservatives? Only under duress. Rather, the prerequisite for attaining any of these goals is a Republican Congress. It's as uncomplicated as that.

The other ballyhooed reason for not showing up on Election Day is that Democrats, once in power again, will misbehave so egregiously that Republicans will roar back in 2008, stronger and more conservative than ever. No doubt Republicans thought this in 1954 when Democrats won back both houses of Congress. But that was followed by 40 years of Democratic control of the House and 26 years of Democratic rule in the Senate. And for most of those years, Democrats held on to

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power in defiance of a rising conservative tide in the country. They know how to keep power once they get it.

National elections are always important. But they are supremely important when America is at war. In Islamic jihadism, we face a foe that is eager to kill Americans in large numbers and as ruthless as it was on 9/11. The difference now is that Democrats no longer want to carry on a real war against terrorists.

In speech after speech, President Bush has evoked the famous words of Winston Churchill in the dark days of February 1941. Churchill declared: "We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle, nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."

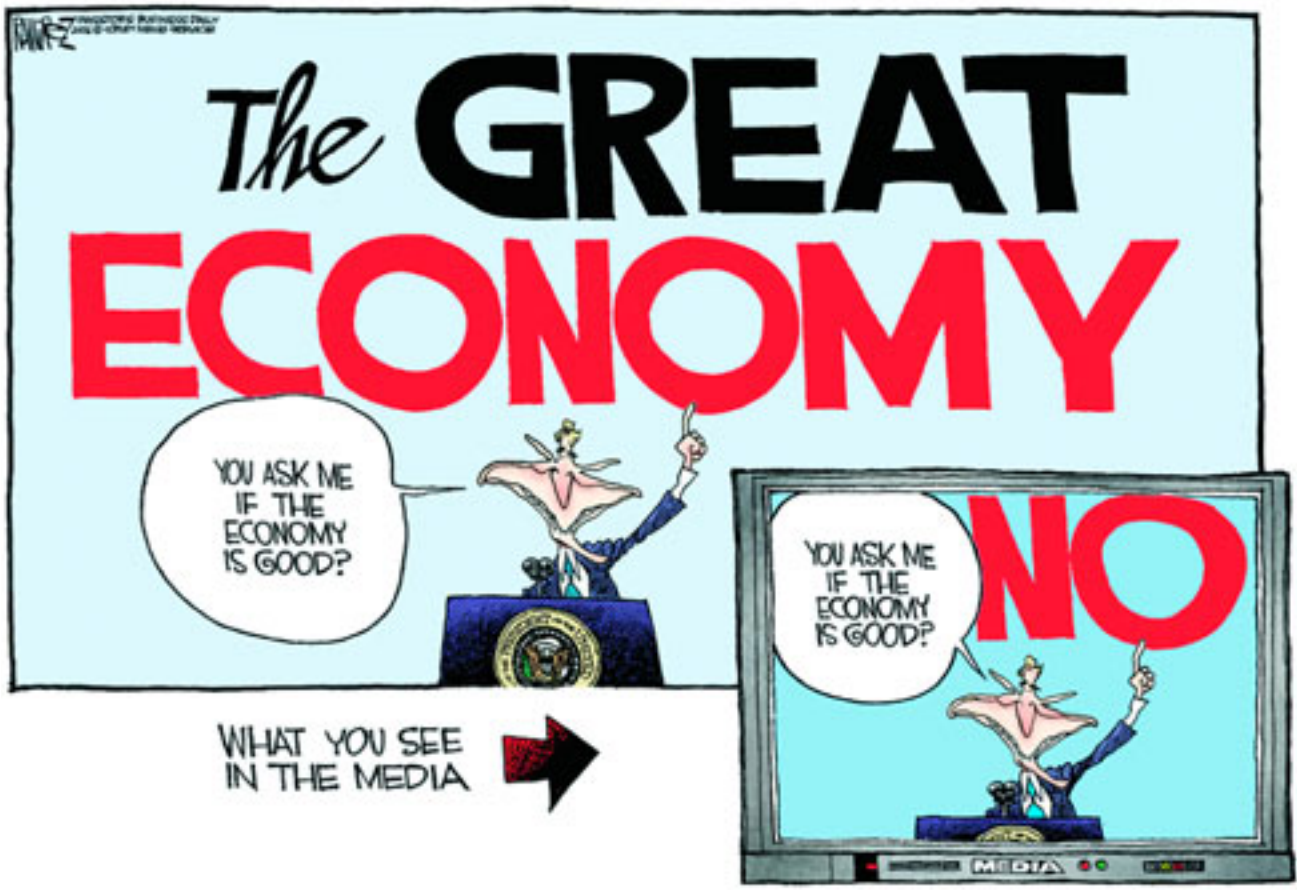
Today, Democrats would deny the president the tools. They would weaken, if not eliminate, the Patriot Act. They would halt the tough but entirely legal interrogations of terrorist leaders that have proved so successful in uncovering and thwarting plots to strike America a second time and perhaps a third or a fourth. They would constrain the National Security Agency from eavesdropping on terrorist phone calls to and from America.

In short, Democrats don't take the terrorist threat seriously. They wince when Bush brings up 9/11. They regard his war on terrorism as more a political strategy for winning elections than a necessary plan to wage an offensive battle against terrorists around the world.

Conservatives in particular should know better. They claim to be the grownups of American politics. They understand what's at stake in the struggle against Islamist terrorists. For them to skip out on their obligation to vote in this election over a petty grievance—or, for that matter, over a not-so-petty grievance—would mark them as politically childish.

Kuo, by the way, has been embraced by the media, welcomed everywhere from *60 Minutes* to *The Colbert Report*. His tale of White House hypocrisy in dealing with religious conservatives is bogus. We know this from the number of religious conservatives in high positions at the White House: Bush himself, Mike Gerson, Karen Hughes, Peter Wehner, Tim Goeglein, and that's just for starters. Colbert asked Kuo why he wrote the book. "Because I think someone had to point out that Jesus and George W. Bush are different people," he said. Who knew?

—Fred Barnes, for the Editors



Michael Ramirez

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In Ford They Trust?

The Tennessee race may decide control of the Senate. BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Nashville

HOWARD DEAN famously groused that southerners vote on "guns, God, and gays." Harold Ford Jr. seems to agree. The five-term Tennessee congressman has a TV ad in which he walks among church pews. On the campaign trail, he hands out "business cards" with his name on the front and the Ten Commandments on the back. During one debate he stressed the importance of "putting God first." He recently told an audience in the West Tennessee town of Camden, "I love Jesus."

Standard Republican boilerplate? Not quite. Ford is a Democrat, looking to fill the Senate seat vacated by retiring GOP majority leader Bill Frist. By drenching his message in pious imagery, he hopes to bridge the "God gap" that often vexes Democrats stumping in the South. While in rural Camden, Ford also talked tough on illegal immigration, boasted of his votes for tax cuts, and threw in some kind words about Ronald Reagan. He refuses to be tarred as a "liberal Democrat," and he has made striking gains among traditionally Republican voters, expanding the ranks of his support well beyond his inner-city base in Memphis.

If it seems like "Harold Ford" has been in Congress for several decades, that's because Ford took over Tennessee's 9th district from his father, Harold Ford Sr., who served for 22 years. The largely black district covers most of urban Memphis, where the Ford family has built an effective political machine. If elected next month, Harold Ford Jr. will be the first African-American senator from the South since Reconstruction.

He has certainly run a shrewd campaign. Ford's nimble appeal to rural, conservative, and God-fearing Tennesseans could serve as a case study for Democrats seeking to make inroads in the Bible belt. Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) spokesman Phil Singer says Ford "has been very smart" about courting GOP voters on their turf, both geographically and ideologically.

A recent headline in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* spoke volumes: "On guns, gays and God, Corker and Ford agree." Bob Corker, a former mayor of Chattanooga, is the Republican Senate nominee. He and Ford both claim to oppose gun control, support the Federal Marriage Amendment, support an anti-flag-burning amendment, and favor school prayer. They differ somewhat on abortion, but both identify themselves as "pro-life."

Ford, a 36-year-old bachelor, has been a rising star in the Democratic party virtually since he entered Congress in 1997 at the age of 26. He gave the keynote speech at the 2000 convention, and mulled Senate bids in 2000 and 2002 before deciding to wait until this year. After the 2002 election he challenged Nancy Pelosi for the post of House minority leader, saying the Californian was too liberal. The caucus vote went 177-29 in Pelosi's favor, but Ford used the moment to boost his visibility and improve his standing among party moderates.

His record in the House is mixed, but on balance Ford cuts a centrist (if at times partisan) figure. An avowed New Democrat, he has voted to trim capital-gains and estate taxes, but also opposed the two major GOP tax cuts in 2001 and 2003. He touted the benefits of private Social Security accounts during the late 1990s, but changed his tune when President Bush took up the cause.

Ford was also a premature Iraq hawk. In December 2001 he was the lone House Democrat to sign a letter urging the Bush administration to target Saddam Hussein. The only other Democrat in Congress who signed was Senator Joe Lieberman. Ford later endorsed the 2002 Iraq war resolution, but like many he has become sharply critical of the war's progress. Just last month he bucked most Democrats by supporting the Detainee Treatment Act, a compromise bill on military tribunals and the interrogation of terror suspects worked out principally by the White House and Republican senator John McCain.

"In the Senate, Harold can *really* make a difference," says a longtime Washington lawyer who once worked for the House Republicans. "He's gonna be the next John Breaux." Breaux, a three-term Democratic senator from Louisiana who retired in 2004, had enough credibility with Republicans to act as a bipartisan broker on issues ranging from health care to taxes. Of course, the Senate Democratic caucus, much like its GOP counterpart, has a way of turning professed "centrists" into lockstep partisans.

Ford's top pollster, Pete Brodnitz, helped Democrat Tim Kaine win the Virginia governor's race in 2005. That bodes well for Ford. So do the coattails of popular Democratic governor Phil Bredesen, who is cruising to reelection with nearly a 40-point lead. "In Tennessee, the governor's race tends to drive turnout," says a senior state Democratic official. "The environment is much friendlier to us than it is to Mr. Corker." This official also believes that independents—who amount to the biggest bloc of Tennessee voters—are tilting toward Ford, partly out of frustration with Bush and the GOP Congress.

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In early October, Rasmussen and Gallup both had Ford leading Corker by five points. The Democrat appeared to be surging. But the past few weeks have seen a shift. Corker's campaign received a facelift with the recent addition of veteran Tennessee operative Tom Ingram as campaign manager, and the race now appears to be extremely close with Corker perhaps enjoying a small lead.

Ingram, who serves as chief of staff to GOP senator (and former Tennessee governor) Lamar Alexander, says he moved the campaign away from an ideological focus and tried to "redefine the choice": between Ford, a "career politician" and a D.C. insider "whose entire life is about perpetuating the family dynasty," and Corker, a "diehard East Tennessean" with a "proven track record of solving complex problems with bold solutions." Ford grew up in Washington and attended the tony St. Alban's prep school. Now, says Ingram, he's trying to sell Tennesseans a bill of goods by posing as a conservative.

With his folksy charm and pleasant twang, the former Chattanooga mayor and wealthy construction magnate seems an ideal GOP candidate for Tennessee, in the mold of Howard Baker and Fred Thompson. Tennessee may be a "red" state—Bush won here by 14 points in 2004—but it's decidedly more moderate than, say, Mississippi or South Carolina. (Tennessee split its loyalties during the Civil War.) In a new TV ad Thompson provides the voiceover, extolling Corker's feats as mayor, couching his life as a pure product of Tennessee, and linking him to the Senate "tradition" of Baker, Alexander, and Frist.

Corker emerged in August from a brutal primary, which featured two former GOP congressmen—Ed Bryant and Van Hilleary—who both attacked him from the right. He wound up on the defensive over abortion: During his 1994 Senate bid, Corker was pro-choice. Now he says he's changed his mind, and hopes to see *Roe* v. *Wade* overturned. (Ford, too, has flip-flopped on abortion: He opposed a ban on partial-birth abortion while Bill Clinton was president, then supported the one that Bush signed in 2003. But Ford has shied away from talk of reversing *Roe*, and the National Right to Life Committee has endorsed Corker.)

Bob Corker

AP / Kingsport Times-News / David Grace

"You take on some water in a tough primary," Corker told me. "At the same time, you become battle-tested." After the primary, Corker relaxed his media efforts, which, Ingram says, "was just a tactical error." Both Bryant and Hilleary are now aiding Corker on the campaign trail. Corker paints himself as a fairly orthodox, if independent-minded, conservative. He backs the Bush tax cuts, opposes embryonic stem-cell research, cheers the ascension of Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Alito, and rejects any sort of "amnesty" for illegal immigrants.

On that last point, the DSCC and the Ford campaign have fired back, claiming that Corker once employed "undocumented workers" at one of his construction sites. Democrats also pound Corker for raising property taxes while he was mayor and for not disclosing his personal IRS returns. The National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) meanwhile blasts Ford's "hypocrisy on moral values," citing his alleged trip to a Playboy Super Bowl party in 2005. The NRSC has even sponsored a snarky website, *www.FancyFord.com*, which tells voters that Ford "likes to live the good life . . . perhaps a little too much."

There is a wild card in this race: the Ford family's legal troubles. Ford has seen one uncle convicted of insurance fraud; another uncle now sits on trial for bribery, witness tampering, and extortion. His father, Harold Ford Sr., was indicted—though eventually acquitted—in a bank fraud case.

In another weird twist, Ford's brother Jake, who has an arrest record, is running to fill Ford's House seat as an independent. In turn, the Ford family has more or less decided to oppose the Democratic candidate for the open seat. Harold Jr. has not endorsed the Democratic candidate, and Harold Sr. is campaigning for Jake. Says Ingram, the family drama "has every Democrat in Memphis and West Tennessee in a tizzy."

Many Tennesseans are surprised that a Democrat with so much baggage has run such a close race against an attractive Republican candidate. The success of Ford's campaign "is the most shocking thing a person could have witnessed in Tennessee politics in a lifetime," says Bruce Dobie, a conservative Democrat and media entrepreneur in Nashville. "It's just astonishing all the way across the board." A Ford victory would arguably be the Senate upset of the year. It might also portend a long election night for Republicans. ♦

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Conclusion First, Debate Afterwards

The stacked Baker-Hamilton Commission.

BY MICHAEL RUBIN

POLICYMAKERS ARE ABUZZ with the explosive recommendations for U.S. policy toward Iraq soon to be released by the Baker-Hamilton Commission: Abandon democracy, seek political compromise with the Sunni insurgents, and engage Tehran and Damascus as partners to secure stability in their neighbor. While former secretary of state James Baker and former representative Lee Hamilton said they would withhold their report until after the elections on November 7 to avoid its politicization, they have discussed their findings with the press. On October 8, for example, Baker appeared on ABC's *This Week*, and the next day he discussed the group's findings with Charlie Rose. On October 12, both Baker and Hamilton appeared on *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*.

Both men are master inside-the-Beltway operators. Rather than prime the debate, they sought to stifle it. While on March 15, 2006, Baker said, "Chairman Hamilton and I have the same objective . . . to make an honest assessment of where we are and how we go forward and take this issue to the extent that we can out of politics," both chairmen designed the commission to affirm preordained conclusions that are neither new nor wise.

Take the four subordinate expert working groups: Baker and Hamilton gerrymandered these advisory panels to ratify predetermined recommendations. While bipartisan, the groups are anything but representative of the policy debate. I personally withdrew from an expert working group after concluding that I was meant to contribute token diversity rather than my substantive views.

Many appointees appeared to be selected less for expertise than for their hostility to President Bush's war on terrorism and emphasis on democracy. Raad Alkadiri, for example, has repeatedly defined U.S. motivation for Iraq's liberation as a grab for oil. Raymond Close, listed on the Iraq Study Group's website as a "freelance analyst," is actually a member of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, which, in July 2003, called for Vice President Dick Cheney's resignation for an alleged conspiracy to distort intelligence, which they said had been uncovered by none other than Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV. The following summer, Close posited that "Bush and the neocons" had fabricated the charge "that the evil Iranian mullahs inspired and instigated the radical Shia Islamist insurgency." To Close, the problem was not Iranian training and supply of money and sophisticated explosives to terrorists, but rather neoconservatism.

Other experts include a plaintiff in the January 17, 2006, lawsuit against the National Security Agency for its no-warrant wiretap program and a think-tank analyst who had not traveled beyond the Green Zone on her only trip to Iraq in September 2003, but nonetheless demonstrated her open mind by declaring the Iraq endeavor a failure in an interview with a German magazine just days before the commission's inauguration.

Baker placed Chas Freeman, his former ambassador to Saudi Arabia, on the panel, despite Freeman's assertion, in the antiwar documentary *Uncovered: The War in Iraq*, that the Bush administration had fabricated its justifications for war. Why seek advice from an area specialist who has clearly crossed the line from analysis to conspiracy?

Even if the eight other commissioners—all distinguished retired government officials—approached their work with honesty, they had little opportunity to get an independent look at developments in Iraq. U.S. evaluations of Iraq have long suffered from an overemphasis on both PowerPoint presentations and conversations with a limited circle of Green Zone interlocutors. During the commission's three-day visit to Iraq, only former senator Charles Robb left the Green Zone, despite the embassy's willingness to facilitate excursions. Had commission members embedded with U.S. servicemen on patrol, each in a separate area of the country, they might have expanded their contacts, broadened their collective expertise, and gained access to unvarnished opinion.

Had they done so, they might not conclude that the solution in Iraq lies with further engagement of Iran and Syria. Rather than inject a "new approach" to U.S. strategy, the Baker-Hamilton Commission's recommendations resurrect the old. In May 2001, Hamilton co-chaired an Atlantic Council study group that called on Washington to adopt a "new approach" to Iran centered on engagement with Tehran. And, in 2004, Baker-Hamilton Commission member Robert M. Gates co-chaired another study group that called for a "new approach" toward Iran consisting of engagement.

The problem is that this "new approach" hasn't been good for U.S. national security. After Secretary of State Madeleine Albright extended an olive branch to the Islamic Republic in March 2000, the Iranian leadership facilitated anti-U.S. terrorists. As the 9/11 Commission found, "There is strong evidence that Iran facilitated the transit of al Qaeda members into and out of Afghanistan before 9/11,

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and that some of these were future 9/11 hijackers."

In the weeks prior to the Iraq war, Washington once again engaged Tehran. Zalmay Khalilzad, the current U.S. ambassador to Baghdad, who, at the time, was Bush's chief Iraq adviser on the National Security Council, solicited a noninterference pledge from Iran's U.N. ambassador in exchange for a U.S. pledge to bomb and blockade the Mujahedeen al-Khalq terrorist camp inside Iraq. Writing in *Asharq Al-Awsat* just after Saddam's fall, Ali Nourizadeh, known as the Bob Woodward of Iranian journalists for his connections to the ruling elite, described how, even as Washington kept its bargain, the Iranian leadership ordered its Qods Force, the Iranian equivalent of the Green Berets, to infiltrate Iraq with weapons, money, and other supplies. "According to a plan approved by the Revolutionary Guards command, the aim was to create a fait accompli," he wrote. Rather than send a diplomat to head its embassy in Baghdad, the Iranian government sent Hassan Kazemi Qomi, a Qods Force commander who was Tehran's former liaison to Hezbollah. Effective realism requires abandoning the utopian conviction that engagement always works and partners are always sincere.

While Baker and Hamilton themselves may be sincere in their convictions, conclusions absent acknowledgment of historical context will backfire. In Iraq, perception trumps reality. Sunni insurgents, former military officers, and Shiite tribal leaders each voiced one common complaint in a meeting last month: They believe Washington is ready to hand primacy in Iraq over to Iran. "You have allowed the Iranians to rape us," a former general said. Just as Iraqis believe the coalition's failure to restore electricity to be deliberate—if NASA can land a man on the moon, who would believe that USAID cannot turn on the lights in Baghdad?—so Iraqis across the ethnic and sectarian divide are convinced the White House has blessed a paramount role for Iran. Why else would we allow Moktada al-Sadr and the Badr Corps to expand their influence unchecked? Such conspiracy theories may appear ridiculous to an American audience accustomed to government ineptitude, but in Iraq they have real consequences: If Washington has blessed Iranian ambitions in Iraq, then Washington is to blame for outrages perpetuated by Iranian militias.

When Rep. Frank R. Wolf conceived of the Iraq Study Group, he chose Baker and Hamilton to lead it in recognition of their extensive diplomatic experience. But it is this experience that may not only condemn the commission's recommendations to failure, but also further inflame Iraq. In the Middle East, Baker's legacy is twofold. As secretary of state, he presided over the 1989 Taif Accords, which ended Lebanon's civil war. By blessing Syrian military occupation, he sacrificed Lebanese independence on the altar of short-term pragmatism. Many Iraqis—Sunni elites and former officers especially—fear Washington may repeat the episode in their country. They fear Baker's cold realist calculations may surrender Iraq to Iranian suzerainty. While Americans may nonetheless welcome short-term calm, in terms of U.S. security, the Taif model failed: Damascus used its free hand to gut civil society and turn Lebanon into a safe haven for terror.

Baker's other legacy may be harder to shake: Iraqis remember him for his role in Operation Desert Storm. On February 15, 1991, President George H.W. Bush called upon Iraqis to "take matters into their own hands and force Saddam Hussein the dictator to step aside." Iraqis did rise up, but Baker counseled U.S. forces to stand aside as Saddam turned his helicopter gunships on the rebellious Kurds and Shiites. Had more commission members exited the Green Zone, they might have found that among the greatest impediments U.S. forces and diplomats face in Iraq is the experience of betrayal that Baker imprinted on their country. Washington's adversaries have capitalized on this legacy. The foolishness of Iraqis' trusting Washington has been a constant theme in Iranian propaganda. Should the Baker-Hamilton Commission also recommend abandoning democracy—which the Shiites understand as their right to power—and urge a political accord with Sunni insurgents, they would push 16 million Iraqi Shiites beyond possibility of accord and into the waiting embrace of an Iranian regime that, paid militias aside, most Iraqis resent.

Iraq is a bipartisan problem. Regardless of the outcome of the 2006, and even 2008, elections, the legacy of Iraq is going to impact U.S. policy and security for years to come. It is unfortunate, then, that the commission has bypassed its responsibility to seek a new approach and instead has embraced the old.

Perhaps, rather than revert to the pre-9/11 habits of short-term accommodation and a belief that two oceans insulate the United States from the world, the commission should expand its mandate. Iraqis fleeing Saddam for the West have embraced democracy wherever they have settled, an indication that their culture is not to blame. Rather than preempt debate, fresh eyes might consider whether the deterioration in Iraq signals the failure of democracy or an inability to ensure the rule of law.

Rather than pretend the Iraq problem can be contained, they might consider whether it has suffered from an unwillingness to address provocations from beyond Iraq's borders. National security depends on dealing with the world we have, rather than the world diplomats construct with smoke and mirrors. Exit strategies might seem easy, but—like the Taif Accords and the failure to topple Saddam in 1991—they are irresponsible and replete with long-term consequences. What is needed in Iraq is reconsideration of the resources and parameters conducive to long-term victory, not a repeat of short-term solutions that will almost certainly fail. ♦

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A New Terrorist Haven

The frightening advance of Islamists in Somalia.

BY DAVEED GARTENSTEIN-ROSS & BILL ROGGIO

WHEN FIGHTERS from the radical Islamic Courts Union (ICU) seized Mogadishu, capital of Somalia, in early June, the Western world briefly noticed. Analysts and talking heads were concerned that the country could become a terrorist haven. Then the media largely lost interest, though the situation remains dire. The ICU is on the verge of winning an even bigger strategic victory, and its links to international terrorism have become impossible to deny.

After Mogadishu fell, Somalia's beleaguered transitional government holed up in the south-central city of Baidoa and watched as the ICU won a rapid series of strategic gains. It took control of critical port cities—most recently, Kismayo, captured on September 25—that give it access to the Indian Ocean. The ICU's advances have met with little resistance, as typified by the capture of the town of Beletuein on August 9. The governor, escorted by a couple of "technicals"—pickup trucks mounted with machine guns—fled to Ethiopia shortly after fighting broke out between his forces and ICU militiamen.

Now, in late October, the ICU controls most of the country's key strategic points. It can move supplies from south to north, and ICU troops effectively encircle Baidoa. In the past month, the ICU has begun to make overt moves against the transitional federal government. The most dramatic came on September 18, when the presidential convoy faced a multi-pronged suicide car bombing attack just minutes after President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed delivered a speech to the transitional parliament. Six government officials died in what was the first suicide strike in Somalia's history. There were further casualties in an ensuing gun battle, but President Ahmed escaped unscathed.

That attack occurred against the backdrop of ICU-inspired protests in Baidoa. The ICU used local supporters to organize demonstrations against the transitional government, forcing government police to disperse a crowd with gunfire.

The bottom line is that Baidoa is a city under siege, as evidenced by a stream of defections from the transitional government's military to the more powerful ICU. Over 100 government fighters stationed near Baidoa have defected. All that prevents the transitional government's destruction is the presence of some Ethiopian soldiers. Early this month, witnesses saw at least thirty Ethiopian armored vehicles pass through Baidoa en route to military barracks about twenty kilometers east of the city, and these troops have set up roadblocks in an effort to protect the transitional government.

Intelligence sources, however, doubt the Ethiopian forces can prevent Baidoa from falling. Some believe that the main reason the ICU hasn't yet mounted a full assault is a desire to prevent the transitional government from escaping to Ethiopia or another sympathetic country and becoming a permanent thorn in the ICU's side: The radicals would like to see all major figures in the transitional government killed or captured.

The primary reason Westerners should care about these developments is the ICU's increasingly clear support for international terrorism. Longtime al Qaeda ally Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys has been appointed head of the ICU's consultative *shura* council. The United States named Aweys a specially designated global terrorist in November 2001. He is one of three individuals believed responsible for the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania who are currently sheltered by the ICU. Aweys's protégé, Aden Hashi 'Ayro, reportedly received terrorist training in Afghanistan as the United States was preparing to attack the Taliban in 2001.

These men have seized power in a country that contains 17 operational terrorist training camps, as described in a confidential report prepared by the nongovernmental group Partners International Foundation in 2002. The claim in this report has been confirmed by a military intelligence source. Today, hundreds of terrorists from Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq, Pakistan, and the Arabian peninsula are said to be flocking to Somalia to train in or staff these camps. According to a military intelligence source, the camps provide training in the use of improvised explosive devices to counter Ethiopian vehicles.

According to press accounts, the ICU has received funding from the Arabian peninsula that allows it to arm its fighters with new weapons. Sheikh Aweys told a group of 600 fighters at the Hilweyne training camp, "This is the beginning, but thousands of other gunmen will be trained. You are the ones who will disarm civilians, restore law and order, and help enforce *sharia* law."

But the presence of foreign fighters in Somalia suggests that Sheikh Aweys and the ICU have ambitions beyond Somalia. Some ICU leaders, such as Sheikh Yusuf Indohaadde, have denied the presence of foreign

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fighters in the country in order to distance themselves publicly from al Qaeda. In a late June press conference, Sheikh Indohaadde said, "We want to say in a loud voice that we have no enemies, we have not enmity toward anyone. There are no foreign terrorists here." Within a few weeks of this unequivocal statement, however, the Associated Press obtained a copy of an ICU recruiting videotape directed at both Somali and Arab audiences (with Arabic subtitles) that showed Sheikh Indohaadde in the desert alongside fighters from Arab Gulf states.

Another senior ICU leader, Sheikh Hassan "Turki" Abdullah Hersi, openly admitted foreign involvement in Somalia during a speech to supporters after the seizure of Kismayo. "Brothers in Islam, we came from Mogadishu and we have thousands of fighters, some are Somalis and others are from the Muslim world," he said. "If Christian-led America brought its infidels, we now call to our Muslim holy fighters to come join us."

Nor is the ICU's support for international jihad lost on the movement's highest leaders. In an audiotape released in late June, Osama bin Laden stated, "We will continue, God willing, to fight you and your allies everywhere, in Iraq and Afghanistan and in Somalia and Sudan, until we waste all your money and kill your men and you will return to your country in defeat as we defeated you before in Somalia"—a clear nod to the rise of the Islamic courts. In July, bin Laden issued an even stronger statement: "We warn all the countries in the world from accepting a U.S. proposal to send international forces to Somalia. We swear to God that we will fight their soldiers in Somalia and we reserve our right to punish them on their lands and every accessible place at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner."

The rise to power of the ICU is reminiscent of the Taliban's rise in the 1990s. Both radical groups are allied with al Qaeda and other foreign terrorists. And like the Taliban, the ICU is now instituting an extremely strict version of *sharia*.

In Somalia, as in Afghanistan in the 1990s, the implementation of *sharia* is facilitated by lawlessness and desperate poverty. The Taliban imposed its harsh rule on what Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid called an "exhausted, war-weary population," many of whom saw the movement "as saviors and peacemakers." Likewise, Somalia, since the toppling of President Muhammad Siad Barre in 1991, has been at the mercy of rival warlord factions known for indiscriminate violence. Rapes and other crimes have been commonplace. It is thus unsurprising that many Somalis view the ICU as a force that can deliver the stability they crave.

In both countries, however, many citizens were unable to accept the radicals' draconian regime. By the time the Taliban was ousted from power in 2001, few Afghans were sad to see them go. Likewise, the influx of tens of thousands of Somali refugees into Kenya shows that not all of the ICU's subjects are happy with their rule.

Where it has taken power, the ICU attempts to regulate virtually every facet of Somali citizens' lives, even barring them from watching soccer matches. ICU forces shot at least two people who demanded to watch a World Cup semifinal this summer. And in mid-September, in the course of raiding a Mogadishu hall where a crowd was watching an English Premier League soccer match, they shot and killed a 13-year-old boy. The ICU has also conducted mass arrests of citizens watching videos, cracked down on live music at weddings, and arrested a karate instructor and his female students because the lessons constituted mixing of the sexes.

Beyond the religious basis for these laws, there is clearly a desire to cement the ICU's control. This can also be seen in the ICU's crackdowns on the media. The Islamic courts have closed several radio stations to stifle dissent. On October 8, they gave the press in Mogadishu 13 rules of conduct that the press freedom advocacy group Reporters sans Frontières describes as a "draconian charter." It prohibits publishing information "contrary to the Muslim religion," information "likely to create conflicts between the population and the Council of Islamic Courts," and the use of "the terms which infidels use to refer to Muslims such as 'terrorists,' 'extremists,' etc." A Reporters sans Frontières press release contends that this charter would result in "a gagged, obedient press, one constrained by threats to sing the praises of the Islamic courts and their vision of the world and Somalia."

The ICU is also moving to disarm the population. In mid-October, the Islamic courts announced the door-to-door collection of weapons owned by Somali citizens and organizations. Only ICU-affiliated Somalis would be allowed to retain their firearms. This move, ostensibly designed to instill order, clearly diminishes citizens' ability to resist the Islamic militia.

Although the situation in Somalia looks grave, the United States has more options for dealing with the ICU than it has in some other areas where terrorist factions have made gains lately, such as the Waziristan region of Pakistan.

Ethiopia's military presence—still relatively light, and meant principally to help the transitional government escape once Baidoa falls—creates an initial opportunity for the United States. Back in the mid-1990s, Ethiopia intervened in Somalia to destroy the predecessor of the ICU, the al Qaeda-backed al-Ittihad al-Islamiya, which was sponsoring Islamic separatist groups in the Ethiopian border province of Ogaden. The Islamic courts are unlikely to be friendlier to Ethiopia than their predecessor. Sharif Ahmed, the head of the ICU's executive council, has openly called for a jihad against Ethiopian soldiers in the country. ICU military commanders have made similar calls.

Nor is Ethiopia the only neighbor concerned about the ICU's rise. On

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October 5, the ICU moved 15 of its technicals to the village of Liboi, in southern Somalia near the border with Kenya. While an ICU spokesman claimed that this was intended to "check the security in the area," the Kenyans viewed the move as provocative. Concern about the ICU's intentions had already prompted senior Kenyan officials to undergo anti-terrorist and counterinsurgency training; when the ICU advanced to Liboi, Kenyan military helicopters responded with a show of force. Kenyan defense minister Njenga Karume later announced that "anybody who might touch Kenya will face the full force of our military."

Since then, Kenya has deployed forces along its border with Somalia. Moreover, the governments of the semiautonomous regions of Puntland and Somaliland are hostile to the Islamic courts.

The United States has significant assets at Camp Lemonier in neighboring Djibouti, where the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa is made up of Marines, Special Operations forces, civil affairs teams, and a U.S. and international naval task force. The Combined Joint Task Force's primary missions have been patrolling the East African coast and the straits of the Bab el Mandeb oil choke point, training regional militaries to fight the spread of Islamic terror groups, performing goodwill missions designed to improve the lives of Africans, and undertaking covert intelligence and hunter-killer missions. A Predator drone said to be operating from Djibouti killed Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi, al Qaeda's chief operative in Yemen, in November 2002.

All is not lost in Somalia. While the transitional government has no power base to rely on, there is enough concern in the region about the ICU's rise that the United States has potential partners with whom it could fashion an appropriate response if it wanted to. The critical question is whether we can muster the will—or for that matter even the awareness—to address the problem. ♦

Taking 'Takings' to the Voters

The California, Idaho, Arizona, and Washington initiatives. BY SHIKHA DALMIA & LEONARD GILROY

THE LIFE STORY of Leo Hayashi, 75, is the stuff of Hollywood epics. Arriving penniless on these shores at age 17, a refugee from war-ravaged Japan via a Siberian concentration camp, he painstakingly scaled the heights of the American dream. He put himself through college, started a one-man real-estate company, and raised a family. Then the trouble began.

Thirty years ago, he bought a piece of land in Brea, near Los Angeles, as a nest egg. But recently city authorities proposed draconian new regulations that, if approved, will nullify most of the long-accumulated value of his land: The 300-acre property will be allowed to hold only 15 houses—instead of the 400 permitted when he bought the land—and only if the owner swallows the cost of a new fire station, sewage lines, and other infrastructure.

Why are they doing this? The official reason is that the slope of the property doesn't allow more homes. But the slope is no steeper now than when Hayashi bought it. The real reason, Hayashi believes, is that the city commission wants to preserve the hills and end development. "I spent years setting aside money to buy this land, paid taxes on it for 30 years," he laments. "For what?"

Not much—if a coalition of big government and big business defeats Proposition 90 in California this November. This proposition would prevent cities like Brea from using their zoning and other regulatory powers to destroy property values without compensating owners like Hayashi. Three other Western states—Idaho, Arizona, and Washington—have similar initiatives on their ballots.

This growing movement against regulatory takings follows hot on the heels of the "*Kelo* revolution"—the widespread movement to limit eminent domain takings that was sparked by the infamous Supreme Court *Kelo* decision supporting New London, Connecticut's use of eminent domain to take property from poor homeowners and give it to rich developers. Yet, as Hayashi's lawyer, Greg Reiger, explains, what Brea is doing to Hayashi is actually far worse than what New London did to Susette Kelo. "If Brea had used its condemnation [eminent domain] powers instead of its regulatory powers to take away his land, it would have had to at least pay him fair market value," he points out. But with regulatory takings—which leave you in possession of the land but take away the most profitable use of it—there is no compensation at all.

Hayashi is not the only victim of overzealous planners bent on combating sprawl or preserving open space or protecting the environment. Ever since the Progressive Era popularized the notion that expert management of land would alleviate all manner of social ills, notes Stephen J. Eagle, a law professor at George Mason University, land-use planners have employed their regulatory powers not to enjoin nuisances, the original purpose of zoning, but to ensure that all uses of private property conform with their vision. The result is that millions

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of property owners—farmers, homeowners, small businesses, churches—have faced financial losses, even total ruin, as ever more aggressive land-use regulations have barred them from any use of their property that doesn't serve the planners' ends.

Oregon, for instance, home to arguably the most draconian land-use policies in the nation, drew growth boundaries around urban areas to combat sprawl. City cores were lavished with government subsidies for mass transit and other infrastructure, while suburbs and villages were starved of the most basic infrastructure. Development was severely restricted in these outlying areas, as well: Farmers were prevented from subdividing their property; individuals had to jump through hoops to get permits to build homes; and loggers were barred from harvesting trees in their own forests. Overnight, farmers and families lost their nest eggs, and businesses shut down. In 2000, the state estimated that these restrictions forced private owners in Oregon to absorb $5.4 billion in uncompensated costs each year.

These restrictions alienated even Oregon's deep blue voters. Two years ago, they overwhelmingly approved Measure 37, a ballot initiative requiring government to compensate owners for losses stemming from regulations that reduce property values in the name of providing public goods. This move—combined with the public outrage over the *Kelo* decision—has sparked a veritable wildfire in the West to give property owners "comprehensive" protection from the government.

Indeed, while voters in many other states will vote on ballot initiatives to curtail eminent domain abuses, those in California, Idaho, and Arizona will vote on twin protections against eminent domain abuse and regulatory takings. In Washington, which already has relatively decent constitutional protections against eminent domain abuses, there is a stand-alone initiative targeting regulatory takings.

But in each state, these initiatives face stiff opposition from a powerful coalition of local government organizations (such as the League of Cities), land-use planners, and environmental groups.

In a classic piece of demagoguery, this coalition is trying to portray the initiatives as the product not of local outrage against draconian land-use and environmental regulations, but of radical property rights groups backed by wealthy carpetbaggers—such as Manhattan real-estate investor Howie Rich—hell-bent on undoing decades of benevolent land-use planning and environmental protection. To be sure, Rich and others have contributed funds to local groups for signature-gathering drives. But the attempt to discredit that basic exercise of political rights is reminiscent of George Wallace's attempt to invalidate the civil rights movement by tying it to a bunch of meddlesome Yankees. (Full disclosure: Contributions from Howie Rich make up about 0.01 percent of the annual revenue of our employer, the Reason Foundation.)

But the hypocrisy of this tactic was recently exposed by Steven Greenhut of the *Orange County Register*. He reported that the California Public Securities Association—a group of financiers and attorneys, much of whose business consists of providing services to local governments—has donated $400,000 to California's "Vote No on Prop. 90" campaign. Similarly, Forest City Residential, a Cleveland-headquartered real estate company with many building projects in California, has contributed $250,000 to the "no" campaign. These businesses are big enough to absorb the costs of complying with wetlands and other land-use regulations. What they want most is a good relationship with local authorities so that they can obtain speedy variances and building permits for their mega-projects. "Their support is motivated by business, not ideological reasons," says David Gilliard, spokesperson for the "Protect Our Homes" or "Yes on 90" coalition. "This is simply Big Business's attempt at pay-to-play." No developer has made donations anywhere near this large to the pro-initiative side, he notes.

The coalition's most disturbing disinformation is the claim that these initiatives are not a spontaneous outgrowth of local anger against overzealous regulations. Yet one has to look no further than the history of Washington's Initiative 933 (I-933) or Property Fairness Act to realize how out-of-touch this argument is.

Washington passed the Growth Management Act in 1990, when the movement to stop "unplanned" growth was at its height. The act required local governments to incorporate environmental, open-space, shoreline, and other protections into their development goals. However, out of concern for the state's many farmers, it also provided that new regulations would not result in loss of land values.

Over the years, however, while the state has passed several bills to buttress the environmental protections in the Growth Management Act, it has done precious little to protect property rights. Washington farmers, among the hardest hit, have been pleading for more balance—in vain. Their frustration—and not outside ideologues or greedy big developers—is the driving force behind I-933.

Initiative opponents are also claiming that property rights groups in Arizona, California, and Idaho are exploiting the rage against *Kelo* and eminent domain abuses to sneak in protections against regulatory takings. But the truth is, you can't stop eminent domain abuses without regulatory takings reform. As Mimi Walters, a Republican assemblywoman in California, explains, if cash-strapped local governments don't have to pay for regulatory takings, they can downzone property—or restrict the development that can be done on it—to lower its value and then use their eminent domain powers to acquire it on the cheap. This is not a theoretical worry. Some cities in California have actually drawn plans to this effect.

But the cleverest argument that opponents deploy is that requiring compensation for regulatory takings would decimate local budgets because government would have to pay land

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owners just to perform its basic zoning and environmental safety functions. Ironically, no less a champion of individual liberty than Barry Goldwater was briefly seduced by this argument when a regulatory takings measure was first put before Arizona voters in 1994. He soon changed his mind, but the damage was already done and the measure was defeated.

Yet this is wrong. For starters, all four initiatives exempt government from any liability for regulations pertaining to public health or safety. Furthermore, each goes to great lengths to protect local budgets from getting flooded by compensation claims for devalued property. The Arizona, Idaho, and California measures limit the potential claims by requiring reimbursement only for future regulations. The Washington initiative applies retroactively to some regulations—but gives authorities the option of waiving the regulations instead.

Clearly, the point of the initiatives is not to prevent government from providing essential land-use or environmental protections. Rather, it is to ensure that if it wants to do more, it do so by digging into its own pocket—not raiding the private homes and businesses of individuals.

Most voters understand this, if the polls are any indication. The Washington initiative on regulatory takings is 16 points ahead, according to an Elway poll. The initiatives in other states that offer comprehensive property rights protections are showing even bigger leads, with Republicans and Democrats supporting them in equal measure. Prop. 90 in California is ahead by 26 points, [though down from a 37-point lead in September] according to a mid-October poll by Datamar Inc.

This is not to say that things won't change come Election Day. Initiative opponents have twice before killed initiatives by pulling some last-minute trick. They torpedoed the 1994 Arizona initiative by obtaining Goldwater's support. And they slew a similar initiative in Washington a year later by releasing a non-peer-reviewed study showing that local governments would suffer budgetary Armageddon if it passed.

What would really shield these initiatives against such scare tactics is the support of prominent Democrats. Yet Democrats veer between silence and hostility. "When it comes to regulatory takings," notes Mimi Walters, "Democrats positively run scared." On the one hand, these initiatives help traditional Democratic constituencies such as minorities and the poor—who are the least able to hire expensive lawyers to fight unreasonable land-use decrees. (In California, for instance, the Black Chamber of Commerce backs the initiative.) On the other hand, these initiatives are deeply offensive to liberal environmental and other interest groups that pump lots of money into Democratic campaigns.

Democrats then are at a crossroads. They can either reaffirm their old liberal commitment to ordinary hard-working Americans—the Hayashis of the world—or they can push the big government causes of the Sierra Club and its ilk. If they choose the Sierra Club over Hayashi, they will be ceding not only the moral high ground but the political grassroots as well. ♦

The Suburbs from Hell

The GOP is in trouble in the districts around Philadelphia. BY SONNY BUNCH

Bucks County, Pennsylvania

WITH FOUR of its congressional races still close in the final weeks of the midterm campaign, Pennsylvania could end up determining who controls the House of Representatives. Polls and other barometers have analysts watching the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Tenth Districts, held by Republicans Jim Gerlach, Curt Weldon, Mike Fitzpatrick, and Don Sherwood respectively. In the most recent *Evans-Novak Political Report*, Gerlach's and Weldon's districts joined Sherwood's in the "Leans Dem" column. How much danger are these incumbents really in?

Of these GOP incumbents, the two who are clearly in trouble—Weldon and Sherwood—are in districts that are generally safe for Republicans. Weldon won in 2002 with 66 percent of the vote, and in 2004 with 59 percent, while Sherwood has run unopposed in the last two elections. Yet the most recent polling shows both of them trailing. Their downfall: the "culture of corruption."

Both men's opponents have been able to portray them as the local embodiment of Republican corruption, in a year when the Democratic leadership is making GOP sleaze a national issue. Their predicaments bring to mind that of another Pennsylvania incumbent defeated in a national sweep—Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, the only Democratic incumbent in Pennsylvania to fall to the Gingrich revolution of 1994. A freshman representative, Margolies-Mezvinsky had cast the final vote to pass President Clinton's 1993 budget, whose massive tax increase helped provoke the Republican sweep. Made to personify the tax-and-spend Democrats, she was handily defeated.

This year, Weldon and Sherwood have given their opponents the rope

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with which to hang them. Weldon's troubles came to a head on October 16, when the FBI conducted six raids as part of an investigation into whether he used his influence to gin up lobbying business for his daughter. Sherwood, embarrassed by a former mistress claiming he had assaulted her, has been forced to take to the airwaves and admit that yes, he had had a mistress, but no, he had not choked her.

Weldon and Sherwood seem doomed to be the Margolies-Mezvinskys of this cycle. Fitzpatrick and Gerlach, by contrast, have kept their noses clean. Consummate politicians, both have good images in the media and good rapport with their constituents. Instead of personal problems, they are up against the increasingly Democratic demographics of their districts.

Gerlach is running in a most peculiarly shaped district, with tentacles stretching north and south from its main body. "This is not a district drawn up in heaven," says Terry Madonna, director of the Franklin and Marshall Keystone Poll. Redrawn in 2002 specifically for Gerlach, the Sixth "has no core, no center," Madonna says, "and it's extraordinarily difficult to represent because of its diversity and complexity." It's also difficult to campaign in. In some neighborhoods you cross a district boundary every few blocks.

That hasn't stopped Gerlach from tireless campaigning. He both touts his local credentials and warns of the dire effects of a Democratic takeover of the House. Touring a packaging plant in Exton, Gerlach was informed that a constituent wanted to know why businesses should get involved in lobbying Congress and endorsing candidates. He chuckled and said, "Tell her to give me a call. I'll tell her what her world would look like with Nancy Pelosi as speaker of the House, and with Charles Rangel as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee." The Republicans' commitment to lower taxes, he stressed, would be good for both individuals and small businesses.

Gerlach is still ahead in most polls. The latest Keystone Poll puts him at 45 percent and his opponent, Lois Murphy, at 38 percent among registered voters, though his lead narrows to 3 points among likely voters. A recent Public Opinion Strategies poll of likely voters is more favorable—Gerlach leads Murphy 51 percent to 39 percent.

Mike Fitzpatrick is another Republican who should be in trouble simply because of demographics. His Bucks County district is populated mainly by commuters (to Philadelphia, New Jersey, and even New York), many of them young families who still vote Democratic even though they like safe suburbs and exurbs with good schools. He does hold one strong advantage, though: He's the only local candidate in the race.

When I asked him to compare his local record with that of his challenger, Iraq war veteran Patrick Murphy, he almost laughed. "He didn't grow up in the district. He made a politically calculated decision to move to the district, based upon an opportunity he saw for himself to run for the Congress."

Fitzpatrick, a former Bucks County commissioner, drove home that point in a debate earlier this month. Allowed to ask his opponent one question, Fitzpatrick chose not to delve into the vagaries of foreign policy or tax law. Instead, he asked Murphy, "How many school districts are there in Bucks County?" Flustered, Murphy was unable to respond.

Fitzpatrick has also managed to distance himself from President Bush on Iraq and has run TV ads portraying Murphy as indecisive on the issue. Larry Ceisler, a veteran Democratic political analyst, says Fitzpatrick runs into problems with the increasing share of his constituents who are liberal on social issues, but he has done a good job of racking up endorsements from disparate groups, including the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and all five Fraternal Order of Police branches that endorse candidates. "I have both business, industry, and labor support," he says. "Not many Republicans have those kinds of endorsements or that kind of support."

Managing to insulate himself from national trends, Fitzpatrick has a simple campaign ethic: "You work hard, you're honest with people, you lay your record out in front of them, and you let them make a choice. And they'll make the right choice." It helps when you don't have to run advertisements explaining that you're not quite as morally bankrupt as you look. ♦

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Extra, Extra, Reid All About It

The press interests itself in the pratfalls of a Democrat, for a change. BY WHITNEY BLAKE

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS investigation of Harry Reid's Las Vegas real estate razzle-dazzle has made a splash equivalent to a drop of water compared with the tidal wave of media attention surrounding Mark Foley. But that doesn't mean the Senate's top Democrat should escape further scrutiny from reporters.

On October 11, the AP broke a story that Reid had pocketed $1.1 million from the sale of land that was not listed on public documents as being owned by him (which was not completely accurate). In 1998, he had bought a piece of residential property on the outskirts of Las Vegas for $400,000. Part of the land he solely owned; another portion he co-owned with Jay Brown, a former casino lawyer who has been associated with, but never indicted for, various organized crime scandals stretching from the late 1970s until last summer.

In 2001, Reid essentially transferred the land to a company called Patrick Lane, LLC, which he and Brown founded. Reid still maintained on congressional reports that he owned the land. He still paid taxes on the land and, because of the nature of a limited liability company, he had a stake in the property, although the extent of his interest in Patrick Lane was never officially documented. In 2004, after the parcel was rezoned as commercial (more on this later), it was sold and developed as a strip mall. Reid made a $700,000 profit.

Reid spokesman Jim Manley criticizes the AP report for implying that Reid didn't note that he owned the land. The only issue that wasn't evident from the forms, says Manley, was "how the interest changed"—which he characterizes as a "technical transfer." However, this in itself might have breached Senate ethics rules. The original AP report cited ethics experts, including a Democrat, stating that Reid should have disclosed the nature of his ownership. Ignorance of the rules is no defense: Reid chaired the Senate Ethics Committee from 2001 to 2002 and held the vice chair position the subsequent year.

Following its first volley, the AP reported that since 2002, Reid had diverted $3,300 in campaign funds to staff at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington, D.C., where he owns a $750,000 condominium, as part of a holiday appreciation gift that residents contribute to annually. Reid reasoned that this was legitimate since the demands on the hotel staff were "a result of my political activities . . . and my Senate position."

Sheila Krumholz of the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics commented on CNN, "You do not use campaign donations for personal use, and tipping your doorman or the condo association just doesn't pass the smell test."

In an October 16 press release, Reid cried foul for the publicizing of the financial dealings, claiming a GOP "campaign of personal attacks and smears" that he wasn't going to let "deflect attention from Republican failures." However, as the AP disclosed, the information driving its reporting came from a former Reid staffer "who had concerns about how it was reported to Congress."

The *Reno Gazette-Journal* reported that while on the campaign trail in Reno for Senate candidate Jack Carter, Reid blasted AP reporter John Solomon, who helped break the story, as a "hit man for the RNC," which was no doubt news to the RNC. "I'm not suggesting," Reid continued when pressed, "I'm telling you that John Solomon is a front for the RNC. I don't know who he works for but he is a front for the RNC." Manley told me that the right-wing blogosphere, which has certainly enjoyed the goings-on, has been pushing the story for months.

Brian Nick, spokesman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, argues that how the land was actually rezoned is the "sketchiest part" of the story. According to Nick, Reid wouldn't have been able to make a $700,000 profit if the land had not been rezoned. Reid's business partner, Brown, had tried twice and failed to get Clark County officials and the town board to recommend rezoning.

During Brown's third bite at the apple in the summer of 2001, the architect associated with Patrick Lane, LLC, mentioned Reid's name while appearing before the County Commission (AP has video of this). Nick asserts it was this name-dropping that finally got a favorable ruling from the board. Manley, for his part, says the fact that Reid's name was mentioned before the County Commission shows the AP was wrong to say Reid's role in Patrick Lane hadn't been documented. When I pointed out that this was the only way his association with the company had ever been disclosed, Manley said that he wasn't sure of the "nuances."

Reid himself apparently never spoke to any commission member about the rezoning application, or told the architect to use his name. Nonetheless, the episode sounds eerily familiar to longtime followers of Reid's career. A June 1979 North Las Vegas *Valley Times* article began, "An electronically intercepted conversation between two Kansas City mob figures links Gaming Commission Chairman Harry Reid to a $10,000 per

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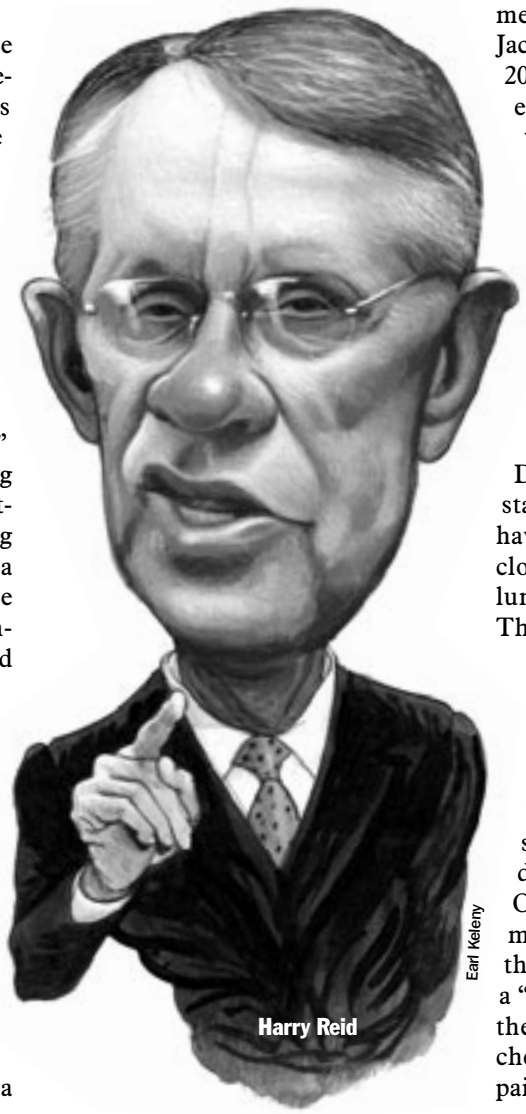
month payment allegedly made to Atty. Jay Brown, who represents Argent Corp. and Tropicana showman Joe Agosto. . . . Reid Saturday denied receiving any money from Brown and charged that his former friend may have been 'trading on my name.'"

In addition, two members of the full board, which overturned the previous zoning decisions, had close ties to Reid, and both in the past were convicted on bribery charges. Dario Herrera, chairman of the County Commission at the time the Patrick Lane plot was rezoned, was "handpicked" by Reid to run for Congress against Jon Porter in 2002, according to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, and was "considered Reid's protégé and the Democratic Party's future star." Reid campaigned for Herrera, calling him "a man of integrity." A year later, Herrera was indicted for taking cash bribes and sexual favors from a strip club owner. Earlier this year, he was convicted on 17 counts of conspiracy, wire fraud, and extortion and sentenced to 50 months in prison. (He was represented by, among others, David Brown, Jay Brown's son.) One of Reid's aides led Herrera out of the courthouse through a secured exit the day of the conviction to avoid a perp walk.

Erin Kenny, also on the commission, was encouraged by Reid to run for lieutenant governor in 2002; Reid funneled $10,000 from his PAC and appeared in ad spots on her behalf. Kenny reached a plea agreement in 2003 for bribery and testified against Herrera.

Aside from the two AP stories, a lengthy *Los Angeles Times* article on August 20, which has received little attention, explored links between Reid and developer Harvey Whittemore. Reid "used his influence in Washington" to help Whittemore turn Coyote Springs, a 43,000-acre development on the outskirts of Las Vegas, into an area with "as many as 159,000 homes, 16 golf courses, and a full complement of stores and service facilities." According to the *Times*, Reid helped Whittemore overcome various legal and environmental hurdles, and Whittemore gave Reid's campaign and PACs


Earl Keleny

Harry Reid

about $45,000 over the past six years, as well as $20,000 to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and $5,000 each to two sons of Reid who ran for local offices (one of whom is a partner at Whittemore's law firm). Another son is Whittemore's personal lawyer and negotiated with various government agencies on behalf of the Coyote Springs project.

Back in May, revelations surfaced that Reid took free ringside boxing tickets from the Nevada Athletic Commission at the same time he was dealing with legislation on boxing regulations. He didn't come down on the side of the commission, and he defended his actions, saying he was "not Goodie Two Shoes." He also met with two of convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff's clients back in June 2003, and benefited from a fundraiser hosted by a former staffer who worked at Abramoff's firm at the time. Some of his contributors, clients of Abramoff's, met around that time with Reid to discuss legislation. He didn't act on the legislation, but did write "at least four letters favorable to Abramoff's tribal clients," according to the AP.

When questioned about this on *Fox News Sunday* back in December 2005, Reid adamantly stated, "I feel totally at ease that I haven't done anything that is even close to being wrong. . . . So don't lump me in with Jack Abramoff. This is a Republican scandal."

What does Reid do when caught red-handed? He simply says "oops" and moves along. Reid told the *Reno Gazette-Journal* that the boxing ticket episode "didn't look right. . . . I just should have paid for the tickets. I didn't, but I'll never do it again." On the land deal: "I don't have any more land to sell in Las Vegas so this won't happen again." He makes a "technical correction" to fix it. For the Ritz-Carlton staff, he writes a check to replace the $3,300 campaign funds. On the backing of corrupt officials for campaigns, Reid says he won't recruit candidates anymore. On the Whittemore story, Reid's office decided to "prohibit any lobbying of Sen. Reid's office by his family," according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

These lapses in judgment are starting to add up to the point where they can't be so easily brushed aside. Or maybe they can. Luckily for him, Reid doesn't fit into the press's preferred mantra of a Republican "culture of corruption." ♦

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Gotta Play to Win

Conservatives shouldn't sit this one out.

BY CRAIG SHIRLEY

IN THE MOVIE *A League of Their Own*, Tom Hanks was given two of the best lines in the history of baseball flicks. The first, as we all know, was, "There's no crying in baseball!" The second came when one of his players quit the game, telling Hanks it was "too hard." Hanks's brilliant response: "It's supposed to be hard. If it wasn't hard, everyone would do it. Hard is what makes it great."

With the midterm elections almost upon us, conservatives need to take that to heart. They won't win by quitting. The *Washington Post* declared last week that Democrats are "prettier" than Republicans—"Democrats seem to be fielding an uncommonly high number of uncommonly good-looking candidates" (glad we've got that settled!)—so let's focus on the important differences between the parties.

Yes, some Republicans have abused their charge; some have engaged in corrupt behavior; some have violated conservative principles; some don't even know why they are Republicans. And yes, many in the "base" are angry with . . . take your pick: growth of government, spending, corruption, steel tariffs, illegal immigration, McCain-Feingold, Mark Foley, the war in Iraq.

I suspect that most of those people in the GOP who are most upset are not Security Moms or the religious right but the "angry white males" credited with delivering Congress to the GOP in 1994. These middle class dads became increasingly repelled by Bill and Hillary and the seedy liberals who came to dominate the Democratic party. Now, some are frustrated with the GOP.

But consider this, my fellow angry white middle-aged males: Ever since economic libertarians and social conservatives came together to form a majority party, the Republicans have thrived on vigorous internal debates. It is not a weakness of the GOP that some of its members are at daggers drawn over foreign policy and national defense, economic policies, and the federal role in education. Whether or not the GOP majority survives the November elections, these debates will take place.

And in this, populist conservatives should take great comfort. Republicans are not so confident about themselves as to believe they have all the correct answers all the time. Conservatives are so suspicious of man's nature that they naturally shun claims of absolute certitude in politics.

If liberalism still has an organizing philosophy, it is a white hot, unreasoned, and, yes, frightening hatred of all things conservative and all things Bush. Within the Democratic party today, the reigning idea is an outright craving of power. Democrats do not allow debate within their party. If you are pro-life, as in the case of the late Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, you are ostracized. If you support some part of the president's foreign policy, as in the case of Joe Lieberman, you are defeated in a primary and then shunned.

If Republicans have disappointed the American people, it's because they have standards and rules that they sometimes fall short of. Liberals are unencumbered by such standards except those of political correctness, and who can figure those out anyway? (In the latest version, Marquette decreed last week that grad students shall not display quotations from humorist Dave Barry on their doors.)

Republicans have established high standards for themselves, and this is a good thing, as we've seen in the Mark Foley case. Some GOP commentators are wailing that 20 years ago, the recently deceased congressman Gerry Studds, a Democrat, did not suffer for his homosexual relationship with a 17-year-old congressional page. And it's true: No one ever calls a Democrat a hypocrite on moral issues. But that's hardly a selling point for a party. Republicans should not be upset if Americans have come to expect not very much in the way of ethics and morality from Democrats.

What the garden-variety angry white male needs to remember is that Democratic anger has a different source than his own. Democrats aren't angry at the moral failings of Republicans. Democrats are furious because they can't understand why they, the party of government, have been denied control of Washington by the American people.

Quin Hillyer, on the *American Spectator* website, poses the question well: "Who do you want, going forward, to handle taxes, national security and judges, the conservatives or the liberals?" A Democratic Congress would not sit still. As Larry Kudlow has warned, the Bush tax cuts will not be safe just because of the veto pen. "President Bush," he points out, might be "confronted with a [Hobson's] choice of vetoing a so-called $500 billion deficit reduction package that would overturn and rollback" his tax cuts.

As Ronald Reagan might ask, whose world would you prefer to live in four years from now, the liberals' or the conservatives'? For my money, I'll take the messy and mistake-prone but good-hearted Republicans over the brooding, power-hungry, and uncommonly good-looking Democrats. So should all conservatives.

Organizing a political movement around the principle of freedom combined with moral rigor has never been easy. But the fact that conservatism is hard is what makes it great. ♦

Craig Shirley is the president of Shirley & Banister Public Affairs and the author of a history of the 1976 campaign, Reagan's Revolution: The Untold Story of the Campaign That Started it All. *He is now writing a book about the 1980 campaign,* Rendezvous with Destiny.

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Pelosinomics

Political Economy: Now that it's all scandal, all the time in Washington, the Democrats are letting their guard down a bit to tell us what they'll do with the economy after they win in November. Maybe we should listen.

Six editorials a day, 30 a week, 132 a month on the most important topics of our time... more than twice what you'll find elsewhere.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has been all over the place talking about what Democrats will do after Nov. 7. But it's hard to take her seriously when she promises to "jump-start our economy and reform our economic policy...to address the needs of working families."

Huh?

"Jump-start the economy"? That's what President Bush did in 2003, when he pushed through bold, broad tax cuts to end a slump that began in 2000 under a Democratic administration.

Since the cuts took effect, the economy has added $1.26 trillion in real output, $14.4 trillion in net wealth and 5.8 million new jobs, while productivity has grown 10% and business investment 24%. Since 2000, total consumer spending has risen $1 trillion – nearly $8,000 per household – after adjusting for inflation. The Dow Jones industrial average is hitting new highs.

Then there's the budget deficit, which the Congressional Budget Office reckons will come in around $250 billion. By our calculations, that's about 1.9% of total output. In early 2004, when Bush vowed to halve the shortfall, it stood at 3.6% of GDP.

The fact is – and we're dealing with facts here, not fantasies – this economy has done better than anyone expected, especially given the mammoth hits it took in the months just before and after Bush took over in January 2001. Democrats know this full well, despite their rhetoric.

They know that nearly $7 trillion in wealth was washed away by the stock market's collapse in 2000 and 2001. They also know that business investment essentially collapsed for three years as a result of that market meltdown and 9/11.

And yet, as noted in a new report from Congress' Joint Economic Committee, ours has outperformed every other major industrial economy since 2001. Reason: tax cuts and low interest rates.

What do the Democrats promise to do about all this prosperity? They'll let the tax cuts lapse, socking millions with billions of dollars in higher levies. They'll raise the minimum wage, hurting the working poor and those with the fewest skills and the least education. And they'll extend jobless benefits, a move that in the past has kept unemployment high (but which today, at 4.6%, is below the average of the last 40 years).

One, and often two, cartoons a day from Pulitzer Prize winner Michael Ramirez, IBD's Editorial Cartoonist and a Senior Editor.

They'll also try to impose new regulations across the economy on everything from energy to broadband, punishing industries they don't like and subsidizing those they do.

Worst of all, they'll do nothing – absolutely nothing – to stop the growth in entitlement spending that will start to engulf the treasury beginning in 2009. Their solution as always: more taxes.

And this is just what they'll admit to. Who knows what else is in store.

How sad the Foley scandal has sucked all the air out of the debate over the nation's future. How tragic that many will now sit this election out for all the wrong reasons. When they wake up to find their taxes raised, the economy stumbling and their incomes falling behind, they'll regret their lassitude. But then it will be too late.

Reykjavik Forever

Security: This week marks the 20th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's bold stand against trading missile defense for an arms treaty. Recalling the lessons of the Reykjavik is key to winning the global war on terror.

At least one house of Congress may be taken over by a Democratic leadership committed to cutting and running from Iraq. And in Iran, a terror regime is trying to pull the wool over the world's eyes about its nuclear program. What better time to recall the late, great president's nerve?

In October 1986, at what was supposed to be a pro-forma meeting between Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in Iceland, the Soviet premier unexpectedly offered an unprecedented reduction in nuclear weapons. His price was that the U.S. abandon all but the most rudimentary research on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which Reagan had called "a new hope for our children in the 21st century."

Contemporary accounts say that after the two sides argued in circles for two hours, Reagan gathered his papers, stood and told Gorbachev: "No way."

A few days after the summit, Reagan pointed out that "the Soviets are hard bargainers. America must be even more patient and determined and united. America must speak with
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cause of peace, the epitome of military schemes, of the unwillingness to remove the nuclear menace looming over mankind. There can be no other interpretation."

The Americans, he added, "lacked the breadth of approach, understanding of the unique character of the moment and, ultimately, courage, responsibility and political determination that are so necessary for

Reagan and Gorbachev bid grim-faced farewells in Reykjavik, Iceland, 20 years ago after the U.S. president refused to budge on missile defense. AP

resolving vital and complicated world problems."

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, just elected second term, compared SDI to France's disastrous Maginot Line in World War II. Missile defense "would increase the nuclear arms race," he said, because the other side "will have to develop their technology to create weapons which

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er Think This Way?

97 Reasons Democrats Are Weak On Defense And Can't Be Trusted To Govern In Wartime

Today's Democrats are nothing like Presidents Roosevelt, Truman and Kennedy, who with courage and decisive action kept on top of their jobs and aggressively confronted one national defense crisis after another.

- Jimmy Carter, elected during the Cold War with the Soviet Union, and ① believing Americans had an inordinate fear of communism, ② lifted U.S. citizens' travel bans to Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia and ③ pardoned draft evaders.
- President Carter ④ also stopped B-1 bomber production, ⑤ gave away our strategically located Panama Canal and ⑥ made human rights the central focus of his foreign policy.
- That led Carter, a Democrat, ⑦ to make a monumental miscalculation and withdraw U.S. support for our long-standing Mideast military ally, the Shah of Iran. ⑧ Carter simply didn't like the Shah's alleged mistreatment of imprisoned Soviet spies.
- The Soviets, ⑨ with close military ties to Iraq, a 1,500-mile border with Iran and eyes on Afghanistan, aggressively tried to encircle, infiltrate, subvert and overthrow Iran's government for its oil deposits and warm-water ports several times after Russian troops attempted to stay there at the end of WWII. These were all communist threats to Iran that Carter never understood.
- Carter ⑩ thought Ayatollah Khomeini, a Muslim exile in Paris, would make a fairer Iranian leader than the Shah because he was a religious man. ⑪ With U.S. support withdrawn, the Shah was overthrown, and ⑫ the ayatollah returned and promptly proclaimed Iran an Islamic nation. ⑬ Executions followed. Palestinian hit men were hired to secretly eliminate the opposition so the religious mullahs couldn't be blamed.
- Iran's ayatollah ⑭ then introduced the idea of suicide bombers to the Palestine Liberation Organization and paid $35,000 to PLO families whose young people were brainwashed to attack and kill as many Israeli citizens as possible by blowing themselves up. This inhumane menace has grown unchallenged.

  The ayatollah ⑮ next created and financed with Iran's oil wealth Hezbollah, a terrorist organization that later bombed our barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Marines and sailors. With Iran's encouragement this summer, ⑯ Hezbollah into not running, ⑲ stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held 52 U.S. personnel hostage for 444 days.
- Carter, after nearly six months, ⑳ belatedly attempted a poorly executed rescue with only six Navy helicopters (three were lost or disabled in sandstorms) and Air Force planes with Delta Force commandos. The mission was aborted, but foul-ups on the ground resulted in a loss of eight aircraft, five airman and three Marines. The bungled plan was never put down on paper for the Joint Chiefs to evaluate. There were practice sessions, but no full dress rehearsal, and pilots weren't allowed to meet with their weather forecasters because someone in authority worried about security.
- America ㉑ can thank the well-meaning but naive and inexperienced Democrat, Jimmy Carter, for a foreign policy that lost a strong military ally, Iran, and ㉒ put the U.S. at odds with a gangster regime that was determined to build nuclear bombs to wipe Israel off the map and threaten the U.S. and other nations. Iran also has a working relationship with al-Qaida, which also wants nukes. Care to connect the dots?
- Shortly after a meeting at which Carter kissed Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev on each cheek, ㉓ the USSR invaded Afghanistan. Carter the appeaser was shocked. "I can't believe the Russians lied to me," he said.

  During the Carter Democrat period, ㉔ communism was on a rampage worldwide. In an unrestrained country-capturing spree, communists took over ㉕ Ethiopia, ㉖ South Yemen (㉗ located at the mouth of the Red Sea where they could block Mideast oil shipments and access to the Suez Canal ㉘ Afghanistan, ㉙ Angola, ㉚ Cambodia, ㉛ Mozambique, ㉜ Grenada and ㉝ Nicaragua.
- Compared to the pre-Vietnam War defense budget in 1964, Carter requested in fiscal 1982's defense budget ㉞ a 45% reduction in fighter aircraft, ㉟ a 75% reduction in ships, ㊱ an 83% reduction in attack submarines and ㊲ a 90% reduction in helicopters.
- The Soviets for years ㊳ consistently spent 15% of their GDP on defense; ㊴ in 1980 we spent under 5%. As a percentage of our government's spending, defense was lower than before Pearl Harbor. No wonder a Republican, Ronald Reagan, had to vastly increase defense spending to help us win the 45-year old Cold War and relegate the USSR to the ash

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  unist enemy rapidly
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  management a 12%
- For eight years ㊹ congressional Democrats ridiculed and fought with Reagan and were on the wrong side of nearly all his defense and economic policies. They said he wasn't bright – an "amiable dunce," as party elder Clark Clifford ㊺ put it. They maintained his tax cuts wouldn't work, ㊻ that he insulted the Soviets by labeling them the "Evil Empire" ㊼ and that he was going to start World War III by putting missiles in West Germany to counter new Soviet SS-20 nuclear missiles installed in East Germany. ㊽ John Kerry wanted a nuclear freeze that would guarantee the Soviets overwhelming tactical nuclear superiority in Europe. ㊾ Kerry seemed to constantly advise retreating, giving up and handing our enemies what they wanted – a recipe for us to lose every war.
- Democrats waffled ㊿ on Reagan's request for support of Contras who were fighting to stay alive and take Nicaragua back from Daniel Ortega's communist Sandinistas. Each month, the Soviets poured $50 million worth of Russian tanks, antiaircraft weapons, Hind attack helicopters and munitions into that central American country.
- Democratic leaders (51) all dismissed as a ridiculous pipe dream Reagan's plan for the U.S. to develop a missile that could shoot down incoming enemy missiles. (52) Showing no vision, Democrats mockingly called it Star Wars.
- Democratic politicians (53) were proved wrong on virtually every vital Reagan policy. (54) His tax cuts set off a huge seven-year economic boom that created 20 million new jobs. (55) Interest rates tumbled from 21% to 7 1/2%. (56) Inflation nose-dived from 12% to 3%. And (57) oil prices collapsed when – contrary to warnings from Democrats – he removed price controls on natural gas.
- Reagan's motto was "Peace through Strength," (58) not peace through weakness and accommodation. With his steadfast determination and perseverance, the communists were kicked out of Grenada and defeated in Nicaragua, Ethiopia and Afghanistan. And for the first time in history Soviet expansion ended.
- Reagan (59) never quit exerting pressure on the Soviets. In Berlin, he demanded that Gorbachev "tear down this wall," and in time the Berlin Wall fell. In the end the communist Soviet Union dissolved. The Reagan-Bush administration had won the Cold War.
- Years later, (60) a group of Russian generals were asked about the one key that led to the collapse of the USSR. They were unanimous in their response: "Star Wars." Gorbachev feared it would render the Soviets' nuclear missiles obsolete for an overwhelming first strike, and they could not afford to build the hundreds more that would be needed or hope to match America's great technical ability. (61)

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How the West Was Won

Is Montana Senate candidate Jon Tester the new face of the Democratic party?

By Matthew Continetti

Billings, Montana

Last year, Jon Tester and his wife Sharla went to Washington. It was early May, around Mother's Day, and Tester was considering a run for the U.S. Senate. The third term of Montana's Republican junior senator, Conrad Burns, was drawing to a close, and Burns looked vulnerable. Tester went to the nation's capital to talk to some people about his potential candidacy, but also to see whether he could live there. Tester grew up, and still lives, in Big Sandy (pop. 710), a farming community in north-central Montana. Big Sandy could not be more different from the District of Columbia. Tester was struck by the size of Washington, the number of people on the streets, but he liked it well enough. He could see himself renting an apartment there—for a few days out of the week. He and Sharla returned home, and on May 24, 2005, Tester announced he would run for the Senate.

It may be time for Tester to start calling Washington area real estate brokers. If Conrad Burns seemed vulnerable in May 2005, there is no question that he is vulnerable today. Burns is one of the least popular U.S. senators. He is bedeviled by his association with convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff and his support for the war in Iraq. He trails in every poll, and D.C. Republicans routinely say they expect him to lose. Try as he might, Burns has been unable to label Tester, a farmer, as an out-of-touch liberal. Instead Tester, like fellow Senate challengers Sherrod Brown in Ohio and Jim Webb in Virginia, is an antiwar populist who talks about economic inequality and the damage done to America by the president's foreign policy.

But Tester might also be something more. The strength of his candidacy is one more sign that the Democratic party is growing in the West. The Interior West—which includes Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming—is slowly embracing Democratic politicians and Democratic policies. And the roster of Western Democratic pols is impressive. In Arizona, there is Gov. Janet Napolitano, who is cruising to reelection. In Colorado, there is Democratic senator Ken Salazar and his brother John, who represents the state's Third Congressional District. In Montana, in addition to Tester, there is Gov. Brian Schweitzer. In New Mexico, there is Gov. Bill Richardson, a potential 2008 Democratic presidential candidate and the current chairman of the Democratic Governors Association. And in Wyoming, there is Gov. Dave Freudenthal, who is also likely to be reelected.

There are additional signs of Democratic growth in the West. Colorado, Montana, and New Mexico all have Democratic legislatures. Democrats command a majority in the Nevada house, though not in the state senate. In Colorado, Democrat Bill Ritter is leading Republican congressman Bob Beauprez in the race to succeed Republican governor Bill Owens. The Democratic leadership in Congress consists of a Mormon from the Interior West (Senate minority leader Harry Reid of Nevada) and a Catholic from the Pacific Coast (House minority leader Nancy Pelosi of California). On Election Day, Democrats are looking to gain U.S. House seats in Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona.

This past summer liberal bloggers from around the country held the first "Yearly Kos" convention in Las Vegas. A few months back Democrats announced they would hold a presidential primary in Nevada between the 2008 Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary. Sometime soon, party leaders will decide whether to hold the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver or New York City. (The Republicans recently chose the Twin Cities for their 2008 convention.) Picking Denver would shift the axis of the presidential campaign westward and confirm that today's Democrats, like so many Americans

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before them, have decided to pull up stakes and seek their fortune on the frontier.

And if that is the case, then Jon Tester is more than an Everyman politician who got lucky and ran for national office in a bad year for Republicans. Tester just may end up being the new face of the Democratic party.

He is a striking figure. Tester is 50 years old, but with his buzz-cut (he trims it every three weeks), paunch, and expressive face, he resembles nothing so much as an overgrown boy. He smiles often and has a contagious laugh. Sometimes he seems out of breath. Though both men would probably blanch at the comparison, there is something of another Westerner, Dick Cheney, in Tester's physicality, in the way he addresses a crowd. He, like Cheney, speaks slowly and with deliberation. He looms over a podium, pulling the audience toward him.

Last Wednesday Tester went to the Hilands Golf Club to speak to 183 invited guests, almost all of them women. It was a friendly crowd. "This is a good group," Tester said. After some mingling he went to the front of the room and mentioned a recent conversation he had had with a friend. The friend had told Tester that many people were unsure about him. Not everyone knows your story, the friend had said. So Tester told the women his story.

He was born in Havre, and grew up in Big Sandy, where his family had lived since his grandfather homesteaded there in 1919. Farming was the family business: As soon as you were able, you were put to work. At times it could be a difficult life. When he was a boy, Tester lost the index, middle, and ring fingers on his left hand in an encounter with a meat grinder. Tester brags that he can still play the piano.

He matriculated at the College of Great Falls, from which he graduated in 1978 with a bachelor's degree in music. When school was over, Tester returned to Big Sandy, where he worked on the farm and taught music to elementary school kids. In addition to piano, he played the trumpet and baritone. While he was teaching, Tester attended church one day and noticed "this great looking lady" and thought, "Wow, this is good." He wanted to get to know her, so he went to the church youth group. The group played softball. Tester let the pretty girl strike him out. She must have appreciated it. Within a year the two were married, and they have remained so for 28 years. The Testers have two children and one grandchild. Another grandchild is due in January. Following Tester last week, I never saw him more than thirty feet away from his wife.

For Tester, life is centered around the family farm, which, at 1,800 acres, is a little smaller than most of those around it. The Testers grow wheat, lentils, barley, and peas, among other things, depending on the current crop rotation. In 1987 they decided to grow only organic crops. It is a crunchy lifestyle, no doubt about it. Tester says on the farm he learned the value of communication and cooperation. "You don't do things alone in this world," he told the ladies at the Hilands Golf Club.

In 1997, around Christmas, Tester called a family meeting to discuss his plans to run for the state senate. The family started campaigning the following February. Tester won. Montana state senators are limited to two four-year terms. It does not seem to be a particularly demanding job. The state legislature meets every two years for 90 days—though the joke in Montana is that things would be better if it met every 90 years for two days. It did not take long for Tester to rise through the Democratic ranks. In 2001 he was minority whip. Reelected in 2002, he served as minority leader for the 2003 session. And in 2005, with a Democratic majority, he was president of the senate.

Since he faced being "termed out" in January 2007, Tester went on, he called another family meeting to discuss his running for the U.S. Senate. "What we talked about was the time between Labor Day and Election Day," Tester said, "about how things were going to be said that were untrue . . . and absolutely cutting." That family meeting led to his and Sharla's trip to Washington, which led to his campaign announcement, which led to the Democratic primary race.

It was a race Tester was supposed to lose. His main opponent, state auditor John Morrison, was an establishment politician with ties to the Democratic Leadership Council. Morrison had the organizational and fundraising advantage. Tester had the support of the liberal bloggers. But Morrison soon faced charges of impropriety, and the race was up for grabs. Three weeks before the June 6 primary, Tester says, "we felt the momentum starting to swing." Campaign aides making calls to voters found that people supported Tester overwhelmingly. "I figured they were calling the wrong people," he told me. But he was wrong. Tester won, 61 percent to Morrison's 35 percent.

"Say hello to the next senator from the great state of Montana," the nation's most influential liberal blogger, Markos Moulitsas, wrote on his website Daily Kos when Tester won the Democratic primary. Later that night, in another post, Moulitsas drew a lesson from the victory. "Tester didn't quit despite early fundraising woes," Moulitsas wrote. "He didn't quit

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when he was down in January 45-25 [percent] according to Morrison's polling. Because people-power matters. And that message will reverberate inside the D.C. political and media elite tonight."

It is difficult to quantify the role the Internet has played in Tester's campaign. When I asked one aide how important the Internet was, he immediately said, "It's huge." For his part, Moulitsas sees in Tester and other Western Democrats the beginnings of a new Democratic party, even a new ideology. In the end, Moulitsas wrote on June 7, John Morrison's advantages—his money, his connections, his experience—were irrelevant. Instead, "people matter." To Moulitsas, this only showed that the centrist Democratic Leadership Council is "an irrelevant, dying organization" because

> it has no *people* behind it. It has no natural constituency. No ability to mobilize anything more than corporate lobbyists for any cause. And in today's people-powered environment, it is an anachronism of a different era, built for a different political world, unable or unwilling to change or adapt. Its candidates are dropping like flies, unable to win contested primaries. More and more DLC-aligned incumbents are facing tough primaries. Its patron saint—Joe Lieberman—may not even be a Democrat for long. You know Tester's dramatic victory has to weigh on Joementum.

Getty Images / Win McNamee

Jon Tester on his Big Sandy farm, October 15, 2006

As it happens, Moulitsas turned out to be right about Lieberman, though the fate of the DLC is still unclear. What is clear, though, is that Moulitsas has done everything he can to champion Tester's candidacy. For their book *Crashing the Gate*, Moulitsas and coauthor Jerome Armstrong, a blogger and political consultant, visited the farm at Big Sandy and wrote an adoring passage on Tester. Reading the books and web posts, you see that the bloggers are attracted to Tester's populism, his antiwar politics, his criticisms of the Patriot Act, and his authenticity.

But Moulitsas also believes Tester and other Western Democrats represent the beginning of a new political animal—what he calls the Libertarian Democrat. In this analysis, traditional libertarians err in seeing the government as the greatest threat to individual freedom. Corporations also threaten personal liberty, Moulitsas writes on his website and in a recent essay for the Cato Institute. So the Libertarian Democrat uses government power to limit the freedom-inhibiting tendencies of global capitalism

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while also guarding against abuses of government power. "A Libertarian Dem gets that no one is truly free if they fear for their health, so social net programs are important to allow individuals to continue to live happily into their old age," Moulitsas wrote in a June 7 post. "Same with health care. And so on."

One could argue that Moulitsas has elided the distinction between Rawlsian liberalism and Hayekian libertarianism. This might be why the Libertarian Democrat is to date strictly a laboratory creature. It has yet to be spotted in nature. Tester himself seems a little more sanguine about the importance of the liberal blogosphere. The Internet's power, he told me, is its ability to get "information out to people." "It's another avenue," he said. "It gives people the option to be interactive. Any time you give information out to folks, it's for the better." Tester believes the liberal blogs energize young voters, and sometimes more senior voters, too. His 86-year-old mother is a political junkie who goes online to read liberal websites like Left in the West, Daily Kos, and MyDD.

In truth, the most important factor in this campaign has not been the Internet. Nor has it been Tester. It has been his opponent, Burns, who seems to have worn out the patience of Montana voters. Tester says Burns has changed. "I just don't think Montanans go back and do the sort of things he did," he told me. "I don't think that was the guy they elected."

Burns, a former Marine, was born in Missouri, but moved to Montana when he was a teenager. He settled in Yellowstone County, where Billings is, and eventually became county commissioner. He was first elected to the Senate in 1988, only the second Republican senator from Montana in the state's history. In 1994 he became the first Republican senator from Montana to be reelected. In 2000 he fought a tough race against Brian Schweitzer, winning 51 percent to 47 percent. Schweitzer went on to become governor. Burns went on to become mired in scandal.

For a state that says it wants to be "left alone"—its legislature has passed a resolution condemning the Patriot Act—Montana is eager for as many federal dollars as it can get. On his website, Burns brags that over the course of his career he has brought more than $2 billion in federal taxpayer money to the state. Most of that money has been in the form of earmarks, or set-asides and grants loaded in appropriations bills. At a time when conservatives have roundly condemned the Republican Congress's nondefense discretionary spending habits, Burns has made his love of earmarks the center of his campaign. "He wants change," Burns said of his opponent on October 17, during a debate with Tester at Montana State University's Billings campus. "I'll tell you what he'll get: spare change."

The Tester campaign says that Burns is not as good an appropriator as he would have you believe. But this argument misses the point. It cuts against Tester's idea that there is something inherently corrupting about earmarks. It is alleged that some of the appropriations Burns is so proud of were favors done for Jack Abramoff. Burns received some $150,000 in campaign donations from Abramoff, who was a strong ally. He has since given that money to American Indian charities, but not before the felonious lobbyist became a central issue in this campaign. On the trail, Tester misses no opportunity to mention Abramoff, lobbyists, and Washington corruption. This clearly frustrates Burns, who has not been accused of any criminal wrongdoing and is adamant that he did nothing wrong. "Jon, you've dribbled this thing out for the last 18 months," Burns said at the Billings debate. "And there's nothing there."

"If there's nothing there," Tester replied, "why did you spend $27,000 last month for your criminal defense attorney?"

Burns has other problems. He is seen as close to President Bush at a time when Bush's popularity has collapsed and his power is waning. Then there is Burns's homespun style. The problem is that it has a habit of spinning out of control. Until recently, Burns's wry sensibility was one of his biggest political assets. But that has changed. This year alone, he has cursed at a group of firefighters, made an insensitive comment about Hispanic immigrants, and forgotten the name of the late Sen. Paul Wellstone. All these incidents caused him embarrassment. Last week, at the Billings debate, Burns claimed that President Bush indeed had a plan for victory in Iraq, but added, "We're not going to tell you what our plan is, Jon, because you're just going to go out and blow it." Whereupon the packed crowd burst into laughter. And Burns lost any credibility he might have had with the audience.

Montana is an unusual place. It is one of the largest states and one of the least populated. It is growing, but slowly. It has the fourth-highest median age among the states, and it ranks 42nd in median household income. It is overwhelmingly white; American Indians make up the largest minority group at 6 percent of the population. There are large numbers of veterans and retirees. In 1992 Montana gave Ross Perot around 26 percent of the vote. Clinton won the state that year, the first time a Democrat had taken Montana's electoral votes since 1964. In 2004 voters broke for Bush 59 percent to 39 percent and passed resolutions banning gay marriage and legalizing medical marijuana.

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Also in 2004, Democrat Brian Schweitzer was elected governor, and the Democrats took control of the state legislature. Schweitzer is an atypical politician with a knack for catchy phrases and unusual positions. Not long ago, he told the *New Yorker*'s Jeffrey Goldberg that his idea of gun control is "You control your gun and I'll control mine." Schweitzer has received glowing media coverage from the *New York Times Magazine* to the *Washington Monthly* to *60 Minutes*. He once took George Stephanopoulos on a helicopter ride. And yet most of this coverage casts a blind eye to Schweitzer's more conservative tendencies. In 2004 he chose a Republican as his running mate. He supported John McCain's presidential bid in 2000. These days he's flirting with supporting Mitt Romney in 2008.

This ability to blur partisan and ideological lines may be one reason for the Democrats' success in Montana and elsewhere in the Interior West. When Schweitzer won in 2004, Democrats had been out of the governor's office for 16 years. They had been in the minority in both chambers of the state legislature for 12 years. Today they are in the majority. As Ryan Sager points out in his new book *The Elephant in the Room*, in 2004 Democrats in Montana won races for four out of five state offices. As Thomas Schaller points out in his new book *Whistling Past Dixie*, no state in the Interior West had a Democratic governor as recently as 2001. Today four of those states have Democrats in the governor's mansion, and Democrats are running strong campaigns for governor in Colorado and Nevada. And as Mark Sundeen pointed out in a recent profile of Schweitzer, a decade ago the Interior West was home to 24 congressional districts of which Democrats held 4. Today the region is home to 28 districts of which Democrats hold 8. On Election Day they may pick up as many as 4 more.

One day last week, I asked Tester why the Democrats seem to be doing so well in the West.

He doesn't know. "Part of it is the fact that we've worked very hard to get our message out," he said, before adding that Montana and other Western states would vote less for Republicans in presidential elections if only Democratic candidates campaigned there.

It was a typical answer. Tester is not what you would call a detail-oriented politician. He tends to stick to generalities. If this were a different year, and Burns were a different sort of candidate, it would hurt Tester. He never mentions how he would vote on taxes. He never mentions which specific health care policies he would adopt, saying only that all options should be "on the table." He avoids confrontation. As I watched Tester interact with voters, I never heard him ask anyone for their vote.

And Tester has another vulnerability. If he is elected, he will become the most liberal senator from Montana in decades. He is a true dove. When I asked him when he would support the use of military force overseas, he said, "Last resort. You've exhausted all other options, then you use military force." He wouldn't say much more. Eventually he added that he supported the war in Afghanistan, "You bet." When I asked him about the Patriot Act, which he has said he would like to see repealed, he softened his language. "We ought not to cut the judicial branch out of it," he said. "If it can't meet constitutional muster, it's got to be scrapped." When I asked him who his political hero was, he chose a stock answer for Democrats, saying that Theodore Roosevelt was a "great man" on "a lot of different fronts." But then he paused, and added that he admired Mike Mansfield, the antiwar Democrat who represented Montana in the U.S. Senate from 1953 to 1977.

It is probably Tester's dovishness, in a post-9/11 world, that has prevented him from opening a double-digit lead over Burns in the polls. In the end, though, this race will be decided on how well the embattled incumbent has represented Montana's interests. Tester's positions on national security issues and his sometimes vaporous rhetoric probably won't matter. Some people even find this latter aspect of his political persona endearing.

On October 17, Tester visited St. Vincent Health Care hospital in Billings, where he ate lunch with a group of doctors. For a hospital dining room, the food didn't seem too healthy: The entrées on offer were chicken fried steak and ham. Tester grabbed a plate and started eating. The conversation was polite. One of the doctors mentioned he once spent a summer in Big Sandy. Tester got excited. They discussed the "big white house" about 30 miles outside of town that the MacNamara ranching family built long ago. Every so often Tester would turn to Sharla and ask her a question.

Then the talk turned serious. The doctors started complaining about malpractice lawsuits. It became clear that these medical professionals felt heavy pressure not only from lawyers sniffing out the next kill but also from government bureaucrats and needy patients. They saw health care not simply in terms of the uninsured, but as a complicated tradeoff involving cost control, access to services, and quality of care. Someone asked Tester what should be done. He clearly had no idea what to say, so he opened the floor to suggestions. After a little more discussion he asked, "So what's the solution?"

"You tell us," one of the doctors replied.

"You guys are in the field," Tester said. "I know how to grease a combine, okay?"

Everyone laughed and smiled, but Tester's smile was the widest of them all. ♦

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Censoring Iraq

Why are there so few reporters with American troops in combat? Don't blame the media.

By Michael Yon

In a counterinsurgency, the media battlespace is critical. When it comes to mustering public opinion, rallying support, and forcing opponents to shift tactics and timetables to better suit the home team, our terrorist enemies are destroying us. Al Qaeda's media arm is called al Sahab: the cloud. It feels more like a hurricane. While our enemies have "journalists" crawling all over battlefields to chronicle their successes and our failures, we have an "embed" media system that is so ineptly managed that earlier this fall there were only 9 reporters embedded with 150,000 American troops in Iraq. There were about 770 during the initial invasion.

Many blame the media for the estrangement, but part of the blame rests squarely on the chip-laden shoulders of key military officers and on the often clueless Combined Press Information Center in Baghdad, which doesn't manage the media so much as manhandle them. Most military public affairs officers are professionals dedicated to their jobs, but it takes only a few well-placed incompetents to cripple our ability to match and trump al Sahab. By enabling incompetence, the Pentagon has allowed the problem to fester to the point of censorship.

My experiences with the U.S. military as a soldier and then as a writer and photographer covering soldiers have been overwhelmingly positive, and I feel no shame in saying I am biased in favor of our troops. Even worse, I feel no shame in calling a terrorist a terrorist. I've seen their deeds and tasted air filled with burning human flesh from their bombs. I've seen terrorists kill children while our people risk their lives to save civilians again, and again, and again. I feel no shame in saying I hope that Afghanistan and Iraq "succeed," whatever that means. For that very reason, it would be a dereliction to remain silent about our military's ineptitude in handling the press. The subject is worthy of a book, but can't wait that long, lest we grow accustomed to a subtle but all too real censorship of the U.S. war effort.

I don't use the word lightly. Censorship is a hand grenade of an accusation, and a writer should be serious before pulling the pin. Indeed, some war-zone censorship for reasons of operational security is obviously desirable and important. No one can complain when Delta Force will not permit an embed. In fact, I have turned down offers to embed with some Special Operations forces because the limitations on what I could write would not be worth the danger and expense. But we can and should complain when authorities willfully limit war reporting. We should do so whether it happens as a matter of policy, or through incompetence or bureaucratic sloth. The result is the same in any case. And once the matter has been brought to the attention of the military and the Pentagon—which I have quietly done—and still the situation is not rectified, it is time for a public accounting.

For generations journalists have been allowed to "embed" with various U.S. military units, including infantry outfits. Infantry is perhaps the most dangerous, underpaid, and unglamorous job on the planet. Infantrymen are called grunts, trigger-pullers, cannon fodder, and ground-pounders. Long hours, low pay, and death, death, death. If they survive, they get a welcome-home party. Sometimes. And that's it: Thanks. In World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, reporters were given wide latitude to travel with the infantry, even if few could stand it for long. Up to last year, this war was no different. A journalist could stay out with the infantry for as long as he could take it. I spent most of 2005 in Iraq, and most of that was with infantry units in combat.

I went to Iraq initially at the behest of military friends who insisted that what Americans were seeing on the news wasn't an accurate reflection of the reality

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The ubiquitous car bomb: Soldiers responding to bomb attacks are all most Americans see represented in news coverage.

on the ground. Two of my friends died on consecutive days. When the charred remains of American contractors were strung from a bridge in Falluja, I put aside a book I was writing to attend the funerals. In Colorado we laid to rest a Special Forces friend who'd been killed in Samara; then on to Florida for the funeral of the friend who'd been murdered and mutilated in Falluja. A photo of the dangling corpses won a Pulitzer.

I purchased and borrowed the equipment required for the journey. Camera, satellite phone, laptop, body armor, helmet, and so on. Like most of the people who would later be called "alternative media," I bore these expenses myself, including the flights to Kuwait. Without media affiliation, I went, saw, wrote, and photographed. There was a dearth of information about the daily experiences of our troops in the U.S. media, and my work, published as a series of photo essays on my website, filled some of that void. My military background helped me navigate the system and provided critical context that informed my observations. I didn't need to be told when to duck, or what not to photograph, or why there had to be a red lens on my small flashlight (it's dim: harder for the enemy to see and saves your night vision). My reports and photographs from 2005 were seen by tens of millions of people.

I believe now as I did then: The government of the United States has no right to send our people off to war and keep secret that which it has no plausible military reason to keep secret. After all, American blood and treasure is being spent. Americans should know how our soldiers are doing, and what they are doing while wearing our flag. The government has no right to withhold information or to deny access to our combat forces just because that information might anger, frighten, or disturb us.

By allowing only a trickle of news to come out of Iraq, when all involved parties know the flow could be more robust, the Pentagon is doing just that. Although the conspicuous media vacuum can be partly explained by the danger—Iraq is arguably more dangerous for journalists than Vietnam or even World War II, when reporters were allowed to land on D-Day—some of the few who will risk it all are denied access for no good reason.

This information blockade is occurring at the same time that the Pentagon is outsourcing millions of dollars to public relations firms to shape the news. This half-baked effort has the unintended consequence of putting

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Photos by Michael Yon

Kurdish schoolgirls: Getting schools running again was often the most urgent post-invasion request of Iraqis.

every reporter who files a positive story under scrutiny as a possible stooge. A fraction of those dollars spent on increasing transportation support might persuade more reporters to request an embed. A reasonable expectation of being able to get to units and get stories filed on time is all most reporters ask. The media people I encountered in Iraq were not looking for four-star accommodations. They knew full well what to expect from a war zone, but they cannot waste days, sometimes weeks, stranded in logistics limbo, held up for reasons that almost never have anything to do with combat.

There's little comfort in the supposition that this mess might be more the result of incompetence than policy. After all, what does it matter whether the helicopter crashed because it ran out of gas or because someone didn't tighten the bolts on a rotor? Our military enjoys supremely onesided air and weapons superiority, but this is practically irrelevant in a counterinsurgency where the centers of gravity for the battle are public opinion in Iraq, Afghanistan, Europe, and at home. The enemy trumps our jets and satellites with supremely onesided media superiority. The lowest level terror cells have their own film crews. While al Sahab hums along winning battle after propaganda battle, the bungling gatekeepers at the Combined Press Information Center (CPIC) reciprocate with ridiculous and costly obstacles that deter embedded media covering our forces, ultimately causing harm to only one side: ours. And they get away with it because in any conflict that can be portrayed as U.S. military versus media, the public reflexively sides with the military.

In September, when the popular blog conglomerate Pajamas Media reported that there were only nine embedded journalists in Iraq, readers lashed out, blaming a cowardly media. But the reality is convoluted. The Pentagon permits an extremely limited number of journalists access, while denying other embed requests that would have been permitted as recently as a year ago.

Following up on the Pajamas Media report, I contacted Major Jeffrey Pool, the Marine officer in charge of tracking media in Iraq. He confirmed the figure of only nine embedded reporters. Three were from *Stars and Stripes*, one from the Armed Forces Network, another from a Polish radio station who was with Polish forces, and one Italian reporter embedded with his country's troops. Of the remaining three, one was an

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author gathering material for later, leaving two who were reporting on a regular basis to what you might think would be the Pentagon's center of gravity: American citizens.

Although the number of embeds is in constant flux, on the day of Major Pool's report there was approximately one independent journalist for every 75,000 troops. Most embeds last for a matter of days. So, how are our troops doing in Iraq? Afghanistan? Who knows?

The bulk of the reporting on Iraq comes from the "Baghdad News Bureaus"—the mainstream media correspondents who, because of the danger, generally gather information from the safety of their fortresses by using Iraqi stringers. But there are people who would go to war and report on our troops. Walt Gaya, a highly skilled photographer who received two Purple Hearts last year as an infantryman, recently received two invitations to embed with combat troops: The first came from the 4th Infantry Division, and the second was from Brigadier General Dana Pittard to embed with military training teams. I've had invitations from countless outfits. Yet when Walt and I requested embeds, Lieutenant Colonel Barry Johnson, the director of the Combined Press Information Center, dismissed both requests out of hand.

Johnson, who has been described as "the most quoted man in Iraq," was quoted last March saying this: "We don't turn down embeds at all. When we get a request, it may be very specific or broader. We go to the unit involved. They manage their own embeds. We don't force them to take anyone; we're not going to force anyone to interact with media. We may offer advice and talk to them about their reasoning. In the end, we respect the wishes of the unit." Walt and I both had requests, and in each case the commanders had put their wishes in writing. In both cases, Johnson denied the embeds.

Johnson was pressed for an explanation during a radio interview. I have listened to the tape. He claimed to have been worried because I have no insurance. "How would Johnson know whether I have insurance?" I wondered. "He never asked." Johnson told the interviewer that he had been in communication with me. This was true, but not in the way he implied, because the only words Johnson ever sent my way were in an email on July 18, 2006, where he wrote:

> Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
>
> Mr. Yon;
>
> I do not recognize your website as a media organization that we will use as a source to credential journalists covering MNF-I operations.
>
> LTC Barry Johnson
> Director, CPIC
> www.mnf-iraq.com

In fact, before Walt Gaya attempted to embed, he and I had a dozen or so phone conversations about his insurance policy. CPIC, for its part, never requested any information about insurance coverage. At the same time Walt and I were being given the brush-off, a blogger and freelance photographer named Chad Hunt was heading for an embed in Afghanistan. (Afghan slots are not controlled by Johnson.) When I asked Hunt if he had insurance, he replied, "Do you think I need it?" Hunt said that nobody had asked him about insurance, which didn't surprise me because it is not part of the standard process during which all embeds sign a detailed Hold Harmless agreement covering matters of injury, dismemberment, and/or death.

Johnson's emailed denial was unconditional. I take him at his word that he refused to recognize my online magazine as a media outlet he was willing to work with. His attitude may, however, come as a surprise to readers like the CentCom soldier who emailed me on October 13: "I have been a reader of your blog for some time. The stories and photographs are some of the best I have seen in the Milblog community. As you may or may not be aware, Central Command Public Affairs has been making an effort to get the military's story out via the blogosphere. The support of people like you and others in the milblog community is invaluable. . . ."

Walt Gaya, though, was intending to shoot pictures for the Veterans of Foreign Wars magazine *VFW*, which is distributed to the approximately 1.8 million VFW members. Surely that is not a media organization with which CPIC is unwilling to work.

After hearing Johnson's insurance excuse, I checked back with Chad Hunt to find out if the public affairs officers he had dealt with had inquired into his insurance arrangements. Hunt's email response: "Nope. What is that?" Hunt was headed for Afghanistan, and on September 3, I emailed him again, "Did you get insurance?" "Yes, I'm here and no insurance." Chad Hunt, like most alternative media, paid his own way to cover the war. As he explained on his website, *chadhuntphotography.com*:

> I have paid for the cost of the plane ticket, body armor, kevlar helmet, ballistic glasses and all the other gear. I never expected to make money off of this and I even had one agency tell me that they would not back me "because embedded images don't sell."

(In fact, Hunt has already sold one of his Afghanistan images. It appeared as a half-page in the October 8 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*.)

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Lieutenant Colonel Barry Johnson has repeatedly gone on record decrying the lack of press coverage in Iraq, all while alienating the last vestiges of any press willing to spend month after month in combat with American soldiers. Meanwhile, "the most quoted man in Iraq" has become a major media source in his own right. Too bad there is no one else to tell the story of our troops. Too bad the soldiers' families have little idea what they are up to from day to day.

As stated at the outset, many PAO officers are extremely hardworking and dedicated. My dealings with other PAOs, such as USMC Major Jeffrey Pool and Army Lt. Col. Steven Boylan, have been exemplary. But a system that so easily thwarts the work of good men and women is a system in desperate need of an overhaul.

The enemy knows that in modern day counterinsurgency, the media are an extension of the battle space. When Abu Musab al Zarqawi, the late and unlamented leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, began losing some of his media battles by broadcasting videos of hostages having their heads sawed off, Ayman al Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's second-in-command, scolded him in a missive later recovered in a raid:

> However, despite all of this, I say to you that we are in a battle and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma. And that however far our capabilities reach, they will never be equal to one thousandth of the capabilities of the kingdom of Satan that is waging war on us. And we can kill the captives by bullet. That would achieve that which is sought after without exposing ourselves to the questions and answering to doubts. We don't need this. [Translation: Just shoot them, dummy.]

During the beginning of the war, when some of us called an insurgency an insurgency, our patriotism was questioned. Is there any question now? Are there just a few "dead-enders" that we are still "mopping up"? When I called a civil war a civil war a full year ahead of the media, out came the dogs. When I predicted success in Mosul even while the guns were hot, many mainstream journalists thought I was hallucinating. But these were all things I learned from being embedded for months with our troops. There was tremendous progress in Iraq in 2005, and I reported it, all while warning about the growing civil war that could undermine everything. I reported extensively on a unit that was getting it right—the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment (Deuce Four) of the 25th Infantry Division—and as I traveled to Mosul, Baqubah, and other places, I was mostly alone as a writer.

Early this spring, when I reported from Afghan farms about this year's bumper opium crop, people thought I was using that opium. Now it is common knowledge that the opium trade is fueling a Taliban comeback. Mark this on your calendar: Spring of 2007 will be a bloodbath in Afghanistan for NATO forces. Our British, Canadian, Australian, Dutch, and other allies will be slaughtered in Afghanistan if they dare step off base in the southern provinces, and nobody is screaming at the tops of their media-lungs about the impending disaster. I would not be surprised to see a NATO base overrun in Afghanistan in 2007 with all the soldiers killed or captured. And when it happens, how many will claim they had no idea it was so bad and blame the media for failing to raise the alarm? Here it is: WARNING! Troops in Afghanistan are facing slaughter in 2007!

The media *do* matter. Our troops are naked without them. Our people would probably still be driving down Iraqi roads in unarmored Humvees were it not for the likes of journalist Edward Lee Pitts, who got a National Guardsman to pose the now infamous "hillbilly armor" question to the secretary of defense. Seven days a week I communicate with wounded service members and families of service members killed in action. They ask, "When are you going back?" They long to hear the details—good, bad, or ugly—that bring them closer to their loved ones. Some get impatient and short with me, perhaps not realizing that Lt. Col. Barry Johnson has the final say and doesn't recognize my work or that of Walt Gaya as warranting an embed on his watch. As this magazine goes to press, military sources tell me that Johnson is on his way out of CPIC, and his successor is said to be much better. This may count as good news. But a system so dependent on the whims of a single officer cannot be relied upon.

The media are far from perfect. War reporters, like everyone else, get things wrong. Some of them, unsympathetic to the war aims, undoubtedly try to twist the news. But no coverage at all is even worse. It does a disservice to American soldiers. It is cruel to their families. It leaves the American public in the dark. If we lose the media war, we will lose Iraq, Afghanistan, and the entire "war on terror."

If our military cannot win the easy media battles with writers who are unashamed to say they want to win the war, there is no chance of winning the hearts and minds of Afghans and Iraqis, and both wars will be lost. And some will blame the media. But that will not resurrect the dead. ♦

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'Samson and Delilah' (ca. 1630) by Matthias Stom

Eyeless in Israel

Biblical metaphor and the Jewish state BY BENJAMIN BALINT

This summer's Israel-Hezbollah war—and the accusations of "disproportionate force" that accompanied it—has once again put Israel's military might in the dock. A new book, a reimagination of the biblical warrior Samson from the acclaimed Israeli novelist David Grossman, sheds light on the subject from an oblique and surprising angle.

Samson's story itself, recounted in the Book of Judges, gives us some of the Bible's most vivid images. An annunciation scene with a nameless angel persuading a nameless, infertile mother to dedicate her miraculous child to God as a Nazirite, forbidden to drink wine and to cut his hair. Samson tearing apart a lion, limb from limb, later to find a honey-filled beehive in its carcass. His Philistine wife betraying the riddle about sweetness hidden in fierceness. Three hundred foxes, crazed by the torches he has tied to their tails, setting Philistine fields ablaze. A thousand enemy soldiers slain with the jawbone of an ass. Gaza's great gate uprooted and carried off on Samson's shoulders. The strongman lying helpless in Delilah's tent, his hair, source of his virility, shorn, and his eyes, the gates of his face, gouged out. The final vengeful, suicidal rage between the pillars.

Lion's Honey
The Myth of Samson
by David Grossman
Canongate, 176 pp., $18.95

Grossman's welcome contribution

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is to adorn this stark drama of action with psychological shading. In this he is guided by a sensitivity both to the richly allusive biblical language and to what he calls the "discord between [Samson's] blessed divine mission and his earthly, material, corporeal (and often childlike) character." Each of these discords is a kind of variation on the enigma that is Samson himself; like his riddle, he is sweetness clothed in strength. Grossman's rendering reveals the warrior capable of lyrical flights of poetry; the ascetic with a hedonistic weakness for women; the restless rogue who judges his people for 20 years; the insurrectionist driven by a complicated compulsion not only to cavort with the Philistine oppressors, but to kill them and love them and then be killed together with them.

The main hue in Grossman's portrait, however, is darker. Grossman suggests that Samson's life was determined by the sense that he had been appropriated for a divine purpose, fated to a solitary destiny he cannot quite comprehend. His life is never fully his own. Commenting on the Bible's suggestion that even Samson's love of the Philistine woman was part of God's design, Grossman adds, "God, even before his birth, has *nationalized* his desires, his love, his entire emotional life." In giving him up to God, Samson's mother bequeathed to him a "lingering doubt as to whether he is a 'legitimate' member of the human family altogether, whether he is 'like other people,' and this corrosive uncertainty is something that can never be shed."

Samson is thus afflicted "with a sense of strangeness," an "eternal non-belonging," an indelible aura of otherness.

In short, Grossman's Samson is the modern Jewish state. In the book's crucial passage, after reminding us that elite combat units of the Israeli army have been named after Samson, and that the country's nuclear program was called the "Samson Option," Grossman writes:

> There is a certain problematic quality to Israeli sovereignty that is also embodied in Samson's relationship to his own power. As in the case of Samson, it sometimes seems that Israel's considerable military might is an asset that becomes a liability. For it would seem, without taking lightly the dangers facing Israel, that the reality of being immensely powerful has not really been internalized in the Israeli consciousness, not assimilated in a natural way, over many generations; and this, perhaps, is why the attitude to this power . . . is prone to distortion. Such distortion may lead, for example, to ascribing an exaggerated value to the power that one has attained; to making power an end in itself; and to using it excessively; and also to a tendency to turn almost automatically to the use of force instead of weighing other means of action—these are all, in the end, characteristically "Samsonian" modes of behavior.

It is true that the figure of "Samson the hero" played a role in the construction of Zionist collective memory, and in building the identity of the "new Jew" who leaves behind exilic helplessness for Israeli self-determination. But Grossman, for whom hero is really antihero, now reverses this reading into a cautionary tale. He is by no means alone in this respect. Noam Chomsky, among others, has claimed that Israel suffers from a "Samson complex," which will compel it to destroy itself along with its Arab enemies. Grossman himself, not intending a compliment, has said that Ariel Sharon "saw himself as a modern Samson."

And yet Grossman proves more adept at coaxing the Bible to disclose its literary subtlety than at teasing out its political wisdom. He complains that God nationalizes Samson, but it is really he himself who does so. In abstracting Samson from an utterly unique biblical figure to symbol of a nation's political psychopathology, Grossman strips his Samson of individuality, of the very layers with which Grossman (and his creative predecessors) endowed him. Samson, after all, inspired some marvelous artistic representations: Milton's blank verse tragedy, a Handel oratorio, a Saint-Saëns opera, paintings by Rubens and Rembrandt, not to mention the first Hebrew play ever written (by Moshe Chaim Luzzatto in 1724), and, in the 20th century, some important Hebrew poems. But Grossman neglects to mention these, for he is less interested in Samson's cultural reception—the ways the biblical figure enriched poetry, painting, and music—than in the political uses to which he has been enlisted.

It is in this sense that Grossman's Samson is best understood against the Samson offered by Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880-1940), the founder of Revisionist Zionism. In his novel *Sampson* (published in Russian in 1926 and in English translation in 1930), Jabotinsky makes his hero an assimilated Jew attracted by a surrounding Philistine culture that, far from being philistine, is more sophisticated than his own. And yet Samson ultimately refuses an offer to join them. He feels alien to his own people, despises its prophets and its backwardness, and knows little of its heritage (he has only vaguely heard of Moses), yet he feels the obligation to champion that people, because it is "hungry," and the Philistines have "sated hearts."

(In his testimony before the Peel Commission on Palestine in 1937, Jabotinsky acknowledged the legitimacy of Arab claims, but added, "when the Arab claim is confronted with our Jewish demand to be saved, it is like the claims of appetite versus the claims of starvation.")

In his last words to his nation, this Samson says: "They must get iron; they must choose a king; and they must learn to laugh." Translated into contemporary language, we might say that, like everyone else, Jews have the right to military, political, and everyday human normality.

Grossman, however—as he also made clear in *The Yellow Wind*, his book about Israel's occupation of the West Bank—believes that Israel's iron brings not normality but its opposite. As even Israel's liberal newspaper *Haaretz* has by now been

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forced to recognize in the face of the country's hesitation, and faltering deterrent power in Lebanon, this view has very real consequences. "The Israeli elites failed," a columnist there wrote in early August. "Their incessant attacks—direct and indirect—on nationalism, on militarism and on the Zionist narrative corroded the tree trunk of Israeli existence from within and caused it to lose its vitality."

Whether Israel will lose its vitality as suddenly as Samson did is an open question. In the end, however, this book usefully opens a window into the psychology not of biblical Samson, or the contemporary Israeli, but of those who accuse Israel of excessive force in defending itself against Islamic fundamentalists who have sent wave after indiscriminate wave of suicide bombers from the West Bank, Qassam rockets from Gaza, or Katyusha bombardments from Lebanon. It seems that these critics consider Jewish force to be an embarrassing liability; perhaps they do not wish to be answerable to the heavy responsibility of using it, or perhaps they see distinction in weakness.

"It was, during two millennia, the dignity of the Jew that he was *too weak* to make any other human being as unhoused, as wretched as himself," George Steiner says, forgetting that the higher dignity lies in having power and wielding it justly.

Grossman is no Chomsky or Steiner; he is, to his lasting credit, deeply involved in the life he criticizes. His son Uri, two weeks shy of his 21st birthday, was tragically killed in the latest war in Lebanon, a couple of days after his father had said at a press conference that Israel had exhausted its right of self-defense there. But in indulging the temptation to make a virtue of political innocence, in refusing to consider that not every exercise of strength is a militarism and not every use of power an idolization of power, his reading of Samson shares some of the marks of an unnatural political consciousness. ♦

The Talking Cure

What it means about what we say.

BY BARTON SWAIM

'A Showdown' (1895) by A.B. Wenzell

Museum of the City of New York / Corbis

Conversation just isn't that important anymore. The activity of speaking face to face with friends and family for extended periods has been, it sometimes seems, outlawed. Families dine in front of televisions; teenagers "text" friends in the same room; and our restaurants and pubs, places formerly thought to foster conversation, now throb with "music" so loud as to force people to shout.

Nobody, certainly nobody in our cities, can engage in conversation for more than 10 or 15 minutes without a cellular phone blurting out some idiotic melody, with the inevitable result that one of the conversation's participants is pulled away for some, no doubt significant, reason. There are PDAs, laptops, and BlackBerrys to keep us disengaged from those around us; and there are the ever-mutating codes of political correctness to discourage us from uttering more than banalities lest we scandalize the enlightened.

Conversation has been written about many times over the last three centuries, but just now, awash as we are in what Stephen Miller calls "conversational avoidance devices," the subject seems refreshingly relevant. Miller's essay, as he calls it, begins with the ancients' views on conversation. Initially I wondered why Miller had felt it necessary to begin with the ancient world (Job, Plato's *Symposium*, Cicero's *On Duties*), but Cicero, it seems, was the first to deal with the vital question about conversation, namely the connection between the habits of cultivated conversation and the stability of the state. It was that relationship—the relationship, in other words, between talking together and living peaceably together—that animated a remarkable number of the 18th century's boldest intellects.

Conversation
A History of a Declining Art
by Stephen Miller
Yale, 368 pp., $27.50

Readers whose interests lie outside 18th-century writing may be surprised to discover just how large the subject of conversation loomed in the minds of Jonathan Swift, Samuel Johnson, and especially David Hume; but for them, as also for the saner thinkers of the French Enlightenment, polite conversation represented one of the few societal conventions keeping civilization from degenerating into disunion and civil war—as, quite literally, England had in the 1640s and '50s.

Barton Swaim is writing a book on 19th-century Scottish literary critics.

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There had, of course, been conversation before and during the English civil wars; but *polite* conversation, which is to say conversation shaped and defined by a complex code of manners, was largely an invention of the 18th century. The Earl of Shaftesbury outraged the ecclesiastical establishment by proposing, in an originally anonymous collection of writings called *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), that modern society should be governed, not by the recondite principles of religion, but by the ideals of politeness. The chief of those ideals was that of cultivated conversation: Free-flowing, good natured, cultured, aimless but reasonable conversation.

Throughout the latter 17th and early 18th centuries, roughly speaking the age of the later Stuarts, coffeehouses sprouted throughout the cities of England, Scotland, and Wales. These were places where the art of polite conversation was practiced and judged with great sophistication by the burgeoning middle classes. Almost every major 18th-century writer, from Alexander Pope to James Boswell, wrote extensively about their own skills in conversation, and especially the skills, or shortcomings, of others. Principal among the spirits of the "conversible world," as it was known, was a writer Miller rightly takes more seriously than is customary in modern scholarship, Joseph Addison, whose hebdomadal essays in *The Spectator* (1711-12) did more than any other publication to promote the virtues of conversation.

Addison wrote at a time when general elections in Britain made elections of our own day seem cheerful by comparison; indeed, many thought civil war was inevitable. Miller reckons that, by modeling in beautifully direct prose the good humor and civility of polite conversations, and by making the goings-on of the conversible world seem so attractive, *The Spectator* helped to lower the temperature of the British polity. While a variety of extremist and obscurantist ideologies goaded the nation towards violence, the presence of a civilized and intellectually vibrant conversible world seemed to offer something better—a national and cultural life defined by reciprocity instead of aggression and bombast, good humor instead of excessive gravity, moderation instead of fanaticism.

Yet as early as the 1750s, the conversible world had come under attack: From novelists such as Henry Fielding, who lampooned the culture of politeness as a culture of pretentiousness and hypocrisy, and from poets such as Thomas Gray, the author of the most popular poem of the century, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," really a hymn to glum solitude. The Romantic poets of the 19th century turned these proclivities into full-blown (and sometimes half-baked) philosophies. Thus, to oversimplify somewhat, whereas the great figures of 18th-century literature generally held that enlightenment was found mainly through debate and discussion within the perimeters of reason and civility, the Romantics—of whom Jean-Jacques Rousseau, alas, was the primogenitor—believed just the opposite.

William Wordsworth's massive poem "The Prelude," to take the greatest instance, taught that true enlightenment would only be found in nature and the simplicity of rural life. The Age of Conversation was dead.

Miller devotes much of the book to the interpretation of literary works, and it is reasonable to wonder how accurately novels and poems reflect historical data about a subject as elusive as conversation. But there's no good alternative to this method, and some of the writers Miller analyzes (I think particularly of the section on Virginia Woolf) lead him to insights about the nature of conversation itself.

Then, too, there is the inevitable difficulty in defining conversation. What is it? Miller is right to insist that the defining component of genuine conversation is that it has no stated purpose. Michael Oakeshott is quoted as saying that conversation "has no determined course, we do not ask what it is 'for'"; it is "an unrehearsed intellectual adventure." That purposelessness probably has a lot to do with why, as Miller's discussion suggests, Americans have never been brilliant conversationalists. From Benjamin Franklin's essay "How to Please in Conversation" to Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Americans are too prone to think of aims and advantages to enjoy conversation for its own sake—although, if I may be permitted to indulge in a little regional conceit, I think this is less true of southerners.

Miller concludes with three chapters on the sorry state of conversation in postwar America; and although, to his credit, he eschews cultural pessimism, the evidence is undeniably grim. Quite apart from all the distractions of modernity, technological and otherwise, conversation has been dealt successive blows by the philosophies of self-absorption. The notion that personal liberation is the highest good, as radical subjectivists from Michel Foucault to Norman Mailer have held it to be, poisons conversation: For conversation removed from the possibility of disagreement becomes mere talk, and not very interesting talk.

Nor is it a stretch to suppose, as Miller does, that the modern habit of responding to critical remarks with insincere acquiescence—"I hear where you're coming from," "Thank you for sharing that"—has its roots in the countercultural nonphilosophies of the 1960s.

The great value in Miller's book is the number of questions it raises. One wonders, for example, whether some of the unfettered rage so evident in our political life isn't in some measure related to our failure to practice the art of conversation. You don't call a man a traitor if he's across the table from you. Yet many political writers, especially, though not exclusively, bloggers, now seem incapable of considering the possibility that those with whom they disagree are anything but traitors or imbeciles. Is it simply a matter of not talking to people often enough?

The book's merits are many, its flaws (an unreliable index, the author's fondness for the word "imply" and its cognates) few and minor. Stephen Miller wishes we thought about conversation as much as we thought about sex, and has said in an interview that he wants people to think about their "conversational life" more than they do. He succeeded with me. ♦

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Horror, 1916

The price of victory in mechanized war.

BY ROBERT MESSENGER

In late 1916, Lord Lansdowne, a former British cabinet minister, circulated a letter to his onetime colleagues calling for a negotiated peace with Germany. He felt that the human and material costs of the war were ripping apart the social fabric of the country. Lansdowne was dismissed by most of his colleagues as a tired old man, yet his was a logical reaction to results of the just-ended Battle of the Somme. In a four-month campaign, 419,654 British soldiers were killed or wounded, along with nearly 200,000 French, in and around the Somme River in northern France. This butcher's bill was paid for seven miles of occupied French soil.

The Somme
Heroism and Horror in the First World War
by Martin Gilbert
Henry Holt, 332 pp., $27.50

The Somme
by Peter Hart
Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 502 pp., $32.95

The Somme
by Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson
Yale, 368 pp., $35

Lansdowne was prescient about how history would judge the battle. The Somme has a secure place in the collective memory as the representative event of a singularly tragic war; a generation of young Englishmen sent to their deaths by unthinking, hidebound generals. The horrors of July 1, 1916—the worst day in the long annals of British arms—lend all the support that is necessary. On that first day of the battle, 19,240 British soldiers were killed and another 38,230 were wounded. The troops were newly volunteered from all parts of the empire, and raw, when they were sent over the top at 7:30 that sunny Saturday morning.

The tales of their heroism and sacrifice remain mortifying after 90 years. The commonplace view of their being "lions led by donkeys," originated in the war memoirs of David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, and the popularizing works of J.F.C. Fuller and B.H. Liddell Hart, was first challenged in the 1960s, but 40 years of scholarship has done little to dislodge its place in the popular imagination.

The Somme offensive was the fruit of long preparations. In December 1915, with the war entered into its second year, the Allied commanders decided that the best hope of victory lay in concerted attack at the earliest possible moment in 1916. The French and British would make a full effort on the Western Front, the Russians would attack on their northern front, and the Italians would push forward into the Isonzo against Austria-Hungary.

War on all sides would bring the Germans and Austrians to crisis and capitulation. Britain's role in the war had been limited by the tiny size of its army—two corps in the field in 1914 compared with France's 21. Herbert Kitchener, the secretary of state for war, predicted that it would be a long war and began the recruitment of Britain's first mass army. Hundreds of thousands immediately volunteered, overwhelming the government's ability to train and equip them.

The Western Front, as it had deadlocked in 1914, offered offensive possibilities in three sectors: Artois, Champagne, and on the Somme. The former two had been tried in 1915—Neuve Chapelle, Festubert, Loos, Vimy Ridge, Main de Massiges, Tahure—at a cost of hundreds of thousands of Allied casualties. New ground was needed, as the extended artillery duels of battle quickly churned the battlefront to impassibility. The Somme was the logical choice. The Germans knew it, too, and had been fortifying the area since late 1914. The plans changed radically in February when the Germans attacked at Verdun. France was plunged into a life-or-death struggle that consumed her whole army. By May it was feared that, if the German assault continued, France must capitulate. No longer would the Allies be going on the offensive to defeat Germany but, instead, to save France.

The British commander in chief, Douglas Haig, had been hoping to wait until August to commit his inexperienced army, but succumbed to French pressure for an offensive by July 1. General Brusilov took the Russians onto the attack on June 4, and the Italians struck on August 6. The attack on the Somme would no longer be a French-led offensive with British help, but just the opposite. The time had come for Britain, and its huge new army, to bear its share of the fighting and the casualties.

In his memoirs, Churchill implied that attacking on the Western Front was an unnecessary sacrifice, that the huge casualties were predictable and the strategic gains negligible. He believed there was an "indirect approach" to victory and dreamed of campaigns in the Baltic and the Dardanelles. But such fighting could simply not affect the outcome of a war being waged by the power of Germany. Only by directly confronting the main body of the Germans—that is, fighting in the trenches—could the British and French win the war.

In August 1915, at a meeting of the war cabinet, Churchill, after an agonizing discussion over the loss of more than 40,000 men in three weeks at Suvla Bay, had inquired "why the losses incurred in Gallipoli were felt so much more, apparently, than the losses incurred in France." Edward Carson, the attorney general, "suggested that the reason was that in France the losses are incurred in killing Germans."

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Killing Germans was the essence. When Britain chose to enter into war with Germany over Belgian neutrality, she entered into a war of attrition. Unless one side is disastrously incompetent, as in the German victories in 1866 and 1871, a war between large industrialized nations will be protracted and appallingly bloody. The American Civil War and the two world wars, the main examples of industrialized warfare, were multiyear bloodbaths where large numbers of young men had to die before one side was ready to capitulate.

(Those who contrast the British experience in the Second World War with the First should note that the blood was shed the second time around by the Soviet Union. The Nazis were defeated in the East.)

The Battle of the Somme was Britain's first real experience of modern warfare. It was so tragic because of their very incompetence at it. The New Army divisions were little trained for the realities of trench-to-trench warfare. They were also poorly officered. As difficult as it is to mold civilian volunteers into a fighting force, it is far more difficult to produce competent officers and NCOs. When war broke out, the British Army had 18 brigadiers and six major-generals. By the beginning of the Somme, the number was 168 and 56. Such rapid promotion does not lend itself to excellence under fire.

The superiority of German arms could be directly attributed to the more than 100,000 NCOs who formed the core of their standing army, and to a stingy attitude to deploying officers into battle. They sent their battalions into the line with eight or nine officers compared to the 25 standard in the British. Four British officers were killed for every German during the Somme campaign.

The British were also woefully deficient with the war's most important weapon: artillery. The horrors of the first day of the Somme were caused by a simple insufficiency of heavy artillery. The British fired 1.5 million shells on the German lines, but only about 11,000 had the high-explosive capacity to destroy the deep dugouts in which the Germans hid themselves during the eight-day artillery prelude. British industry was not yet capable of producing enough large guns and high-explosive shells to support a large field army. That came in 1917. British artillerymen, moreover, had yet to learn the skill of counter-battery fire—finding and destroying enemy gun emplacements as they begin firing on advancing troops—which meant that many units of the British infantry were shelled continually on July 1.

The French troops who attacked that day actually gained all their objectives (six of the 19 Allied divisions in action were French) and only gave up their advance when it became obvious that the British were failing to support them. The French used experienced troops—infantry and gunners—who knew both how to lay down a creeping barrage, how to attack behind one, and how to silence German guns.

There's a standard cliché about World War I being dominated by the defensive, which is not supported by any evidence. The war was dominated by the power of artillery, defensive or offensive. Shells ruled the battlefield, and no matter what troops did, they suffered. Troop transport and battlefield communication had yet to develop to a level where soldiers on the offensive could exploit the power of their artillery, which was fairly immobile. Infantry could take any position on the battlefield within their artillery's range, but they could not continue the advance because of the enemy's artillery shelling them from positions their own artillery couldn't yet hit.

Modern artillery meant that both attacker and defender suffered massive casualties in every attack. To believe that the huge death toll of the war was the result of bad generalship is to fail to grasp the essence of industrialized warfare. As populations grow and technology advances, war grows more bloody; there are both more people to kill and more efficient means of doing so. If you look closely at casualties in war since 1860, you will see a steady escalation, in line with industrialization and population growth. War was exponentially brutal from First Manassas to Khe Sanh. And Britain's military and political leaders certainly knew it.

In August 1916, the indefatigable Churchill, back from service in the trenches, circulated a memo to the cabinet attacking the lack of strategic gains from the Somme offensive. The response from General Haig was that the attack had relieved Verdun and done grievous harm to the German war machine. He vastly overstated the losses the Germans had suffered, but his point was clear: The British Army was killing a lot of Germans.

The cabinet accepted Haig's final minute as official policy, and it contains a line of immense interest. "Our losses in July's fighting totaled about 120,000 more than they would have been, had we not attacked." It is appalling to think of H.H. Asquith's government—the apogee of Britain's great 19th century—acquiescing in the deaths of tens of thousands of young men, but that's what it did. The cabinet grasped what we like to forget: that the crux of national warfare in the modern age is accepting the deaths of 120,000 young men in hopes of killing 240,000. Over the course of the 141 days of the Somme, the British averaged 2,950 casualties, which was less than they suffered in the Arras campaign in 1917 (4,000) or the war-winning offensive in late 1918 (3,600). The Germans averaged 5,800 casualties a day in the spring 1918 offensives that brought them so close to victory.

After accepting Haig's minute, the war cabinet assured him "that he might count on full support from home," with the prime minister himself noting that he found the argument "very satisfactory." After the war, the politicians may have found it expedient to blame the generals, but they ordered up the bloodbaths.

Historians of the First World War face daunting tasks, thanks both to the complexity of the war and to the immense archives of material. To depict a battle in strategic whole cloth is to miss the essential experience of

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Hulton-Deutsch / Corbis

British machine gun unit on the Somme

those who fought. But to focus on the experience of the combatants makes for strategically confusing reading: The war's battles were too diffuse to be presented like Waterloo or Omdurman. The historian must search for some middle ground—or write to such length as to appeal to a readership in the dozens. What remains the best study of this problem, John Keegan's *The Face of Battle* (1976), devotes a third of its pages to the Battle of the Somme. Keegan got deep into the heart of the fighting experience, while also illuminating every facet of the hard undertaking of making battle intelligible to a reader safe in his chair at home.

The modern literature on the Somme began a little bit earlier, though, with *The First Day on the Somme* (1971) by Martin Middlebrook. In the late 1960s, this Lincolnshire farmer developed a keen interest in the battle during a visit to the memorials in Picardy. He began tracking down survivors and eventually interviewed 546. His book based on these meetings is a brilliant evocation of the patterns of the July 1 battle. Rooted in the actions of individual soldiers, it is a deeply moving tale of heroism and horror, and the book to be reading if you ever make a tour of Picardy.

Many Somme books are simply updates of the Middlebrook method. Huge archives of interviews, letters, and diaries now exist in England, and the new volumes by both Peter Hart and Martin Gilbert are products of these troves. Hart's book is a weaving together of quotes from ordinary soldiers' memories. He has drawn broadly, thanks to his role as the Imperial War Museum's oral historian, but the book is an anthology masquerading as a narrative. The material is extraordinary, and I'm grateful to have read every word; but it's a browser's book, not a reader's.

Alhough I will say that Hart writes with wit and insight as he weaves his material together, Middlebrook's *First Day on the Somme* is distinguished by the way it integrates the soldiers' stories into a main narrative, and Gilbert is similarly successful. What's most moving in his account is the way he punctuates each part of the narrative with the tale of a single soldier's experience, a short biography that captures a lost life in surviving words. He brings these individuals to life only to have to notice where, in the large number of Imperial War Graves Commission cemeteries in Picardy, the soldier is remembered. Gilbert easily achieves his modest goal of "perpetuating the memory of those who fought and those who fell." But this is a muddled account of the battle as a whole—hard to fathom on any level other than individual experience—and does nothing that hasn't been done before, and in a fairly prosaic form.

At its best, popular history can translate specialized scholarship into general knowledge. There remain any number of scholarly debates about the Somme—the two most important are over the generalship of Douglas Haig and the total number of casualties sustained by the Germans—and the best accounts will go to some length to interpret the battle. With Gilbert, readers will struggle to sort out the casualty figures or understand the commanders' difficulties or why troop morale remained high despite the slaughter. That the book will, in all likelihood, overshadow two far better accounts is a shame. Gary Sheffield's *The Somme* (2003), part of Cassell's *Fields of Battle*

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series, is a short interpretive account of the battle that presents a concise narrative and takes stands on most of the issues. It's a model of what a serious scholar can do when given a general-interest assignment.

Even better—and longer, more developed, and much more opinionated—is Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson's *The Somme*. Prior and Wilson are the authors of one of the best books of recent scholarship on the war: *Command on the Western Front: The Military Career of Henry Rawlinson 1914–1918* (1991), which Sheffield himself cites, along with Middlebrook, as major influences on his own career choice. (The volume is newly reissued in Pen & Sword's fabulous *Military Classics* series, where you can also find Tim Travers's *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front, and the Emergence of Modern War 1900–1918*. These two monographs are the signposts along the way to a new interpretation of the war that arose in the 1990s.)

Prior and Wilson have been at this work for a long time. They are in control of a vast body of material and always seem to have the right document or anecdote at hand. The battle comes to life—though much more briefly than in Middlebrook—but so does the campaign and the political pressures on the generals. Their damning critique of Douglas Haig is laid out clearly enough for the reader to judge. The only flaw in the book is a disregard for the French part in the Somme campaign, which is mostly ignored. Sheffield scores on this point by giving the French corps' success on July 1 their due.

When the Battle of the Somme ended in November 1916, the British army in France had suffered grievous harm, but it had also begun to develop the skills needed to win the war. They had learned how to use heavy artillery and developed trench-to-trench fighting techniques. Fifty-three of the army's 56 divisions had seen action on the Somme, and the surviving officers and men formed the core of the army that defeated Germany in 1918. It was a horrible way to learn, but it was an unavoidable step in the defeat of Imperial Germany. ♦

Born Free

The 'interesting madman' who upset the Enlightenment. **BY LAWRENCE KLEPP**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Restless Genius
by Leo Damrosch
Houghton Mifflin, 576 pp., $30

"It would have been better for the peace of France if this man had never existed," remarked an early 19th-century visitor to Rousseau's grave. "It is he who prepared the way for the French Revolution." The visitor, who knew a thing or two about disturbing the peace, was Napoleon Bonaparte.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau actually would have loathed the Revolution that his writings helped inspire. In 1757, when he was living in the countryside outside Paris, there was an attempted assassination of the king, accompanied by riots, and "I thanked Heaven," he wrote in *The Confessions*, "for having removed me from those spectacles of horror and crime, which only would have nourished . . . the bilious humor that the sight of public disorders aroused in me."

He hated crowds, let alone angry ones. He preferred the peace and quiet of the rustic cottages usually provided for him by aristocratic admirers, where he could dream of the primitive simplicity and goodness of humanity that civilization had corrupted with its artificial desires, its luxuries and inequalities.

Rousseau, of course, didn't invent the idea of humanity's lost innocence. Aside from the archetypal eviction recounted in Genesis, the Greeks and the Romans looked back on their Golden Age, and the Chinese Taoists missed the mystical harmony between man and nature and the unforced simplicity of life that civilization, its morals and knowledge as much as its vices, had skewed.

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Rousseau, who loved solitude and reverie and contemplating mountain streams as much as any Chinese sage, was a kind of Swiss Taoist. He became famous overnight at 37 by winning an essay contest with an argument that spectacularly broke with the Enlightenment's faith in science and progress. (The idea came to him, like most of his ideas, while on a long walk in the country.) He didn't actually believe that humanity could return to its lost Arcadia, but the first sentence of *The Social Contract*—"Man is born free, but is everywhere in chains"—became a potent nine-word revolutionary manifesto, written by a man temperamentally unsuited to revolutions.

Rousseau was an inconsistent, eloquently illogical sort of philosopher, and he tended to stray far from his own premises, in his books and his life. His name will forever be associated with the idea of the basic goodness of human nature, and some of its modern side effects, like utopian politics, primitivism, and misconceived educational and judicial reform. But the most genuinely revolutionary thing he ever thought up was probably Jean-Jacques himself, the searching, self-displaying, self-justifying protagonist of *The Confessions*, the book that shocked and mesmerized all of Europe when it was published after his death, the book that begins: "I am made unlike anyone I have ever met; I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the whole world. I may be no better, but at least I am different."

His life, as he recounted it, replaced the Enlightenment's purely rational

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individualism with a psychological drama of self-realization, the sense of a true self compromised by the demands of the surrounding society and needing some self-determining, self-expressive release. And the ideal of self-realization, however problematic in terms of social cohesion, tradition, and public decorum, has become one of the most attractive and contagious things about Western democratic-capitalist culture, and one of its most powerful weapons against its enemies, whether they deny it in the name of the state, racial or religious purity, the laws of history, Allah, arranged marriages, or something else.

As Leo Damrosch points out, Rousseau was "very much a modern individual, cut off from family and origins, self-defined, moving from place to place and from one set of relationships to another." The born outsider was born in 1712, the son of a Geneva watchmaker. He had no formal education. His mother had died just after his birth, his older brother disappeared, and his father eventually left, too, so he was forced into unhappy apprenticeships where he got into trouble for reading (he practically memorized Plutarch) instead of working. He ran away at 16 and began a life of dreamy, aimless wandering, with stints as a servant and tutor and composer of music, plus the picaresque episodes recounted in *The Confessions* (baring his backside to shock some girls, recoiling from the sexual advances of other vagabonds, being seduced by a lady in a coach) and his cherished interval of domestic (and sporadic sexual) intimacy with Madame de Warens, the woman he always called "Mama," who was 13 years older than the naive teenager when she took him in.

It was one of the many things Rousseau never got over. (Damrosch notes that long before psychoanalysis, Rousseau recognized the formative significance of childhood experiences.) His life, and arguably his philosophy, became an aching search for maternal tenderness, for childhood innocence and wholeheartedness. The preoccupation with innocence was also a measure of the guilt induced by, among other things, his own birth, fatal to his mother, the shameful incident in which he got another servant fired by blaming his own theft on her, and his abandonment to an orphanage of all five of the children he had with his companion later in life, Thérèse Lavasseur, a semiliterate Parisian servant.

Corbis / Gianni Dagli Orti

Rousseau by Charon after Bouchet

Brooding, earnest, and generally awkward and slow-witted in company, Rousseau impressed almost nobody on his meandering way to fame. "What? That imbecile?" was the reaction of one man who had employed the young Jean-Jacques when he heard of his success. And long after his death, Madame d'Houdetot, one of his aristocratic admirers and the object of a feverish *amour-fou* on his part, remembered him as an "interesting madman."

The paragons of the Enlightenment whom he admired and befriended and then turned against, such as Diderot, Condillac, Voltaire, and Hume, said much the same thing. He was too sensitive, needy, suspicious, impulsive, and unpredictable for lasting friendships, and he became, in effect, the first in the long line of alienated loners who populate modern literature.

Damrosch's essential point is that only an outsider with a self-sabotaging gift for remaining one could have had the ideas he had, ideas that broke the frame of 18th-century thought and still do some damage to our own frames as well. (Romantics, classicists, liberals, Marxists, conservatives, and anarchists have all been drawn to at least some of them.) He points out the sharp contrast between Rousseau and his American contemporary Benjamin Franklin, who also wrote an autobiography that begins with poverty, long walks, and apprenticeships, but who pursues, instead of a thwarted inner self, a methodically constructed, socially useful self.

> Rousseau wanted to recover his true self by getting rid of habits that social life called for, whereas those habits were exactly what Franklin wanted to acquire. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that Franklin and Rousseau stand at opposite poles of the legacy we have inherited from the eighteenth century. Contemporary American culture talks the Rousseau line but lives the Franklin life. When we talk about getting in touch with our true selves, we're talking like Jean-Jacques Rousseau. When we commit ourselves to careers or strive to be 'team players,' we are living like Benjamin Franklin.

Damrosch's biography is vivid and irresistibly readable (more so than *The Confessions*, which flounders in paranoia and self-pity in the second half), and he makes many of Rousseau's ideas seem freshly relevant. But he might as well have conceded that much of the political philosophy was little more than a series of rhetorical flights, and the speculative anthropology was as cockeyed as Margaret Mead's view of Samoa. Rousseau, like another music-loving, Alp-loving, long-walk-taking intro-

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vert a century later, Nietzsche, was good at introspection but not so good at imagining a society worth emulating. (As with Nietzsche, it had to be austere.)

Sparta? Savage tribes? City-states that ban the theater? Democracy animated by the portentously vague "General Will"? Rousseau was basically an escapist, and his political philosophy is about escape into an imaginary past or future, just as his life was about escape into one-sided love affairs, reveries, and solitary walks. He was better at writing about his own haphazard life than at rearranging life for other people. Read *The Confessions*, but when offered *The Social Contract*, don't sign on the dotted line. ♦

'Reds' Alert

Warren Beatty's history lesson is 25 years old.

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

The movie star Warren Beatty, like so many people these days, is getting old, and with the hot breath of mortality on the back of his wattled neck he has undertaken the large project of reclaiming his reputation as a maker of movies. And not a moment too soon, either. Beatty's last several pictures have ranged from the kind that barely break even (*Bulworth*) to the kind that break the bank—calamitous, apocalyptic commercial failures like *Love Affair*, costarring Pierce Brosnan and Annette Bening, and *Town and Country*, costarring Goldie Hawn and Garry Shandling. In fact, it's difficult to find anyone in the continental United States who has watched either of these last two Beatty movies anywhere but in an airplane, and even then many passengers were reported to have jumped rather than watch Garry Shandling cuddle Goldie Hawn. Those two aren't getting any younger, either.

So now we who survived *Town and Country* are being asked to make room for *Reds*, the 1981 historical epic that Beatty produced, cowrote, directed, and starred in. For some reason *Reds* has never been released on home video, and although no one seems to have complained about this, Beatty and Paramount Home Entertainment are rolling out a 25th anniversary double DVD this month, with as much fanfare as they can muster. The new discs pile several hours of additional material on top of the movie's original running time of three-and-a-half hours. When a promotional preview copy arrived unbidden in the mail the other week, I was surprised to discover that *Reds* was worth watching, or rewatching, if only for clinical reasons. It's a period piece, of course, but in a complicated way: It's a window into the past—a window into a 1970s window into the teens, to be specific, and a relic of the kind of leftism that has already faded, though the hangover remains.

Reds tells the story of John Reed, played by Beatty, and his wife Louise Bryant, played by Diane Keaton. Reed, if he's remembered today at all—and he wasn't much remembered in 1981, either—is known as the author of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, an energetic account of the Russian Revolution. Vladimir Lenin himself wrote the book's introduction. Reed covered the revolution as a highly sympathetic, and highly paid, magazine correspondent. Later, before his death in 1920 at age 33, he became more directly involved, as an American member of the First Comintern. Reed was a courageous adventurer, a vivid writer, and a keen observer. He was not, however, terribly scrupulous in what he recorded. His friend Bertram Wolfe, later to become the great Sovietologist, recalled a mutual acquaintance once reproaching Reed for exaggeration in his reporting:

"But it didn't happen that way!" said the painter friend.

"What the hell difference does it make?" said Reed. He was a painter, too, he said—one who disdained "photographic accuracy" in favor of an "over-all impression."

In politics he was just as gauzy. He knew nothing of economics, socialism, Russian history, or the Russian language, and though he didn't understand capitalism he despised it, for all the usual good-hearted reasons. He fell hard for any strongman who seemed to him embarked on a grand project to remake society and lift up the working man. His politics were ambidextrous: For Reed, Mussolini no less than Lenin pointed the way to a brighter dawn. Well-meaning, ignorant, talented, romantic—he was, in other words, a bit of a booby. Growing up, Warren Beatty idolized him.

As director and screenwriter, Beatty applied Reed's reportorial principle—forgo accuracy for the big picture—to the telling of Reed's adventures. In a notice about the movie's rerelease, a reviewer for the *New York Times* called *Reds* a "superior history lesson," which just goes to show how badly *Times* movie reviewers need a history lesson. It is much easier to make the case that *Reds* is a grand work of the cinematic art, which it isn't, than that it's an adequate means of conveying accurate information about John Reed or the revolution. Crucial events are telescoped or ignored, characters invented or reimagined, chronologies upended. Scenes that never happened—such as a final confrontation between Reed's wife Louise and her sometime lover Eugene O'Neill, played by Jack Nicholson—become pivot points in the plot.

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And it's not as though Beatty was in such a rush he didn't have time to get the story straight. He began working on a screenplay about his hero not long after his breakout movie *Bonnie and Clyde*, in 1967. This was at the dawn of Radical Chic, when a left-wing movie glamorizing a fellow-traveling, Mussolini-loving American pseudo-Communist—a prime example of one of Lenin's "useful idiots"—might have seemed like a terrific idea; edgy, even. In a new interview included in the DVD release, Beatty mentions that he was inspired to do the movie by what he calls (still!) "the mistaken American paranoia about Communism." He hired the British playwright Trevor Griffiths, a foam-flecked Marxist propagandist, to help him write the screenplay.

Unluckily for them, between the original inspiration in 1967 and the release of the movie in 1981, a terrible thing happened: the 1970s. From Angola to Vietnam to Cambodia to Afghanistan, Communism looked less romantic by the day, and even for some leftists, "fellow traveling" took on a slightly sinister cast. Paranoid Americans elected as their president a Baptist scold who, upon taking office, turned around and began lecturing them about their "inordinate fear of Communism." Meanwhile, the film production ground on, and by the time of its release in 1981 Americans had kicked out the Baptist scold in favor of a president who gave every indication of believing we really would all be better dead than red.

Tossed by these ideological cross-currents—from Radical Chic to detente to Reaganism—Beatty apparently suffered a failure of nerve. The politics of *Reds* are a muddle of feints and hesitations and unexplored inferences. As the great movie critic Richard Grenier pointed out at its release, its point of view is best described as "anti-anti-Communist," not so morally obtuse as to be pro-Communist but disdainful above all of anyone who disdained Communism with unseemly zeal. Beatty takes much greater care, for instance, demonstrating the creepiness of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, father of America's first Red Scare in the late teens and early 1920s, than portraying any lapse of the Bolsheviks.

Diane Keaton, Warren Beatty

Everett Collection

By most accounts, Reed himself had grown disillusioned with the Revolution at the end of his life. Beatty hints at the disenchantment but seems unsure of its cause. Reed is shown objecting strenuously to a Bolshevik functionary who has rewritten one of his dispatches, after which Reed never quite rekindles the old revolutionary fire. A hack myself, I sympathize. I hate it when that happens. But as a source of disillusionment, "*They messed with my copy*" doesn't compare with "*They're liquidating two million kulaks*."

With his politics so uncertain—or OTB (overtaken by events) as the journalists say—Beatty decided, instead, to make a movie about sex. Here's where the re-release of *Reds* has much of its contemporary interest, inadvertent though it is. While he was developing *Reds*, Beatty made two movies, *Shampoo* and *Heaven Can Wait*, that celebrated his status as a swordsman of world-historical achievements. *Reds* gave him the chance to reconcile his progressivism with his priapism—which is also, when you think about it, what the entire New Left was trying to do in the 1970s, too. The movie catches him at the zenith of his pulchritude. Unfortunately, it catches Diane Keaton, playing his wife, at the zenith of looking like Diane Keaton. Yet old photos show Reed to have been an oafish-looking, potatoey fellow, while Bryant was often described as a great beauty. Maybe Beatty should have played her instead.

People who recall the movie from 1981 may be surprised to discover that Louise, not Reed, is at the movie's heart. It begins and ends with her. In real life, however, whatever her looks, Louise Bryant was a much less appealing person than Reed, and much less interesting. By turns an aspiring poet, journalist, artist, and model, she dumped her first husband to follow Reed to New York City, where they set up house in the center of a colony of Greenwich Village bohos. She worked his journalism contacts to build a career of her own. It never quite panned out. She had none of Reed's talent, none of his insouciance or large-heartedness. But the ideology of Free Love—redubbed sexual liberation 50 years later—offered compensations. She took several lovers on the side, including O'Neill, at the time her

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husband's best friend. She dumped them, too, when she followed Reed to Russia in hopes of advancing her career. And while he grew uneasy as the revolution curdled, she accommodated herself to Leninism quite easily.

She wrote admiringly, for example, of Feliks Dzerzhinski, founder of the Soviet secret police: "It was his duty to see that the prisoners were quickly and humanely disposed of. He performed this grim task with a dispatch and an efficiency for which even the condemned must have been grateful, in that nothing is more horrible than an executioner whose hand trembles and whose heart wavers."

From this sour, unpromising material, Beatty tried to fashion Louise into a feminist ideal, an independent woman and early career gal, whose sex life was omnivorous, earnest, politically potent, and, by the look of it, not much fun at all. The Louise of *Reds* is as much of a stud as Beatty was in real life, but her studliness is a means to personal liberation. While the God of socialism was failing, on screen and off, Louise holds out a separate set of possibilities. In retrospect, Keaton's performance stands as the high-water mark of a certain kind of feminism, and—wonderful to say—it's the most anachronistic thing in the movie. In 1981 she was supposed to look self-actualized, noble, and worthy of emulation. Now, in the post-feminist age, where the most wholesome elements of feminism have been widely absorbed while others, less wholesome, have been discarded, Louise comes off as shrill, impetuous, self-centered, grandstanding, hedonistic, irresponsible—a mess.

The sexual revolution, we now know, didn't turn out any better than the Russian one. Of course, there's no way that Warren Beatty, of all people, could have figured on that in 1981. He probably thought he was pointing the way to a brighter dawn. Now this creaky old flick captures something else: The moment when sex displaced socialism as the ideological preoccupation of the left—another signpost, confidently directing all who would follow it to another dead end. ♦

The 'Borat' Show

The man who would be Kazakhstan's man of the moment. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

A cheap-looking and extremely strange movie with an even stranger title—*Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*—is opening in a few weeks, and it will make a sensation. Columnists will write op-eds about it. Talking heads will try to dissect it on chat shows. Already, several months before its release, two rather dissimilar institutions—the government of Kazakhstan and the Anti-Defamation League—have issued statements of concern about Borat's potential to do harm.

Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan
Directed by Larry Charles

Ham-handed responses like those just play into the glorious and very tough-minded comic sensibility that animates Borat. This movie is satire in its truest, most courageous, form. Oxen are gored right and left. America is savaged. The Third World is savaged. Feminists are savaged. Evangelical Christian tent shows are savaged. Frat boys are savaged. Political correctness is savaged. The attitude that says political correctness is humorless twaddle is savaged. This is one of the four or five funniest movies ever made.

The movie follows Borat Sagdiyev, a news reporter for Kazakh television, as he journeys from his small village to the United States and travels around making a documentary intended to explain America to his countrymen. Borat isn't real. He's a character invented and portrayed by the British comic actor Sacha Baron Cohen. But most of the people in the movie are everyday Americans who have no idea Borat is a fictional character being played by a British comedian. They believe there is an actual Borat Sagdiyev and that they are being filmed for his documentary.

Cohen pioneered this form of kamikaze interviewing with his character Ali G. Cohen's producers would call up celebrities and politicians in Britain (and later here) and ask if they would be interviewed by a young journalist from the BBC or HBO. They would agree, and then find themselves face to face with a tall white Rasta doofus asking them the dumbest questions ever devised. The comedy came not from Ali G's dense queries but from the reactions of the celebrities and politicians, who could not believe what they were hearing and yet had to stay cool and collected because they knew cameras were rolling.

When Cohen created Borat, he took this brilliant concept to a new level. For while Ali G is just a well-meaning idiot, Borat is something else entirely. He's cheerful, friendly, and outgoing. He is also a crazed anti-Semite, racist, and misogynist—not because he's chosen to be these things but because everybody he has ever known shares the same prejudices. When Borat interacts with Americans, he presumes they believe what he believes. Most don't, and watching them react with growing horror and disbelief at Borat's grotesque beliefs is hilarious. It's even more hilarious—and discomfit-

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Fox Movies

Sacha Baron Cohen in action

ing, as true satire should be—when Borat finds secret allies in the American heartland.

The genius of Borat is that it works on you in all sorts of different ways. In one sense, it's a raunchy comedy in the tradition of *Animal House* whose highlight is a crazed and enraged wrestling match between Borat and his obese producer. They wrestle in a hotel room, then in the hallway, then in the elevator, then through the lobby and into a ballroom where an actual, real-world convention is having its annual dinner. The wrestling is wild, violent, cartoonish—and both men are naked. The sequence is a classic piece of slapstick—as indelible in its way as the Marx Brothers' stateroom scene in *A Night at the Opera* 70 years ago.

Like Chico Marx, Cohen is an old-time dialect comedian, and Borat mines its title character's mangled English for everything it's worth. But here again Cohen and his collaborators take things a step further. If you listen carefully you will discover that when Borat speaks Kazakh, he is actually speaking a combination of Slavic-sounding nonsense and conversational Hebrew. (Cohen's mother is Israeli.)

Which brings us to the central question about *Borat*: What are we to make of its title character's happy, chatty, and thoroughgoing Jew-hatred? The character, which debuted on Cohen's Ali G show on HBO, first came to prominence with Borat appearing at an open-mike night at a redneck bar, singing a catchy little ditty he had composed called "Throw the Jew Down the Well." In the movie, we learn that the highlight of the year in Borat's Kazakh village is a festival called "The Running of the Jew." Borat and his producer come to America but refuse to fly across the country because they are afraid the Jews might be planning "to restage their attack of 9/11." And in the film's most headspinning scene, Borat books a room in a real bed-and-breakfast run by a Jewish family in Pennsylvania, and spends the night in a state of abject terror, sure the mild and lovely couple are planning to poison him, steal his money, and drain his blood.

The answer to the central question is, of course, that Borat is a satire of anti-Semitism—a riposte and retort to it in every conceivable way. The film's first director, Todd Phillips, quit halfway through because he was certain Borat needed a character who would argue with Borat and challenge his opinions. Cohen refused to sugarcoat his portrait of this global idiocy by offering an audience stand-in to tell Borat it's not nice to say the Jews caused 9/11. (The credited director is Larry Charles, who also helms most of the episodes of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.)

When Jonathan Swift recommended cannibalizing children as a solution to the problem of Irish hunger in "A Modest Proposal," the greatest work of political satire in English, he did not explain that he was being facetious—and the humorless solons of his time screamed in horror. Sacha Baron Cohen is no Jonathan Swift, of course. But he's as close as we're likely to come on the silver screen in 2006, and we're lucky to have him. ♦

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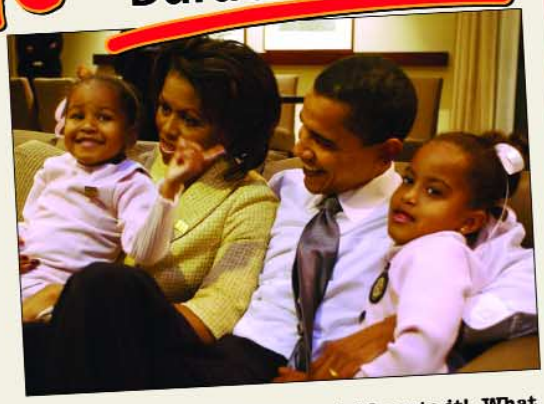
"When the election is over and my book tour is done, I will think about how I can be most useful to the country and how I can reconcile that with being a good dad and a good husband. I haven't completely decided or unraveled that puzzle yet."
—Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., Time *magazine*

Parody

Kidz' Letterz TO Barack Obama



Dear Senator Obama,
A funny-looking musician with sunglasses named Bono came to my school and told us we should do everything we can to help the starving kids in Africa. What do you think my classmates and I should do?
Ashley
Beverly Hills, California

Dear Ashley,
Hey, that "funny-looking musician with sunglasses" tells me the same thing! What can you and your friends do to help the kids in Africa? Well, a good friend of mine, Mrs. Ritchie, has just brought a little boy named David from an orphanage in Malawi to live with her at her home in England. Maybe you and your friends can do the same thing!
Senator Obama

★ ★ ★

Dear Senator Obama,
I'm a student here at Harvard and my mama tells me there ain't no way a person of color be treated fair in Amerika even if they go to Harvard and [stuff]. You cool with that?
Franklin
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Franklin,
Hey, if a kid whose daddy was from Kenya and his mama was from Kansas can go to Harvard and be elected United States Senator from Illinois, you can make it, too! I'm just trying to be the best husband, best dad, and best United States Senator I can be, with whatever God has given me; and if you don't think you can do it, too, I'm enclosing a DVD of my historic keynote speech to the 2004 Democratic National Convention. Enjoy!
Senator Obama

★ ★ ★

Dear Senator Obama,
My dad works at a famous research laboratory trying to find a cure for cancer, but with the Republican war on science and all, he and his friends are very discouraged. My dad says that if they found a cure for cancer, Bush would probably veto it! What can I do to cheer my dad up?
Matt
New York, New York

Dear Matt,
Hey, if your dad can dedicate his life to finding a cure for cancer, it's the least I can do to stop by and say thanks. I'm looking at my calendar and see that I've got some time between 3:50 and 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 12. Have your dad get in touch with my people about arrangements, etc.
Senator Obama

★ ★ ★

Dear Senator Obama,
My boyfriend just broke up with me, and I'm grounded because I dented my parents' car in the parking lot at Whole Foods last weekend. I feel like I don't have anything to live for.
Morgan
Seattle, Washington

Dear Morgan,
Hey, you're not going to believe this, but I just published a book called **The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream!** I had somebody exactly like you in mind when I wrote it, and it's available at all major bookstores and online at Amazon.com for just $25! Maybe if you got your parents a copy, too, they wouldn't be so hard on you for the kind of simple accident that happens to everyone, even United States senators!
Senator Obama

ANIMAL CORNER

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